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HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF COMMAND AND CONTROL ACTIONS
IN THE 1962 CUBAN CRISIS

C&C Internal Memorandum No. 40

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FOREWORD

This enclosure is part of a study of command control processes involved in the Cuban crisis of October 1962. The scope of the entire study is as follows:

- Basic Paper - National Military Command and Control in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.
- Enclosure A - Historical Analysis of Command and Control Actions in the 1962 Cuban Crisis.
- Enclosure B - Procedural Analysis of J-3 Command and Control Operations during the Cuban Crisis, October 1962.
- Enclosure C - Functional Analysis of Command and Control Information Flow in the Joint Staff during the 1962 Cuban Crisis.
- Enclosure D - Analysis of Command and Control in the Service War Rooms in Support of Joint Staff Operations during the 1962 Cuban Crisis.

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ENCLOSURE A

O&C INTERNAL MEMORANDUM NO. 40

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF COMMAND AND CONTROL ACTIONS
IN THE 1962 CUBAN CRISIS

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PREFACE

1. The historical analysis in the present paper is part of a larger study of national military command and control during the Cuban Crisis of 1962 (see "FOREWORD" section, p. ii). It addresses itself to the substance of command and control experience that shaped the U.S. response, concentrating on specific actions, their circumstances, and their consequences.

PURPOSE

2. The purpose of the historical analysis, as indeed of the entire study, is to assist the Joint Staff by providing an empirical basis for improving national military command and control capability to deal with crises. It is intended as a case study to demonstrate the actual structure and processes of command and control attending a recent real crisis of major proportions.

3. The central objective is to identify significant command and control phenomena, examine the context in which they occur, isolate the critical variables involved, and determine their implications regarding the dynamics of the national military command and control system then in effect. To this end, it seeks first to describe the command and control environment by defining the nature and unique characteristics of the crisis situation and reconstructing the main currents of crisis events. Secondly, it seeks to expose the anatomy of the command and control mechanism in terms of how it coped with particular crisis problems. Throughout, the emphasis is on discrete acts and explicit circumstances.

4. It is expressly not the purpose of this analysis to pass judgment on the intrinsic merit of actions taken at any level

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DATA SOURCES

7. All available sources of information potentially relevant to the inquiry -- from official to journalistic, from formal documentary records to informal testimony based on personal recollections -- have been enlisted and utilized. However, all of the pertinent sources known to exist have not been made available. Therefore, a lacuna in the research should be noted at the outset. Access to some of the primary sources of intelligence and reconnaissance data, which had a key role in decision making, was denied on grounds of security sensitivity, as were also the records of proceedings in the meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the sessions of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. A considerable amount of such information, though, is reflected directly in secondary official sources, or can be reliably inferred from collateral and derivative documentary indications.

8. The principal sources from which the bulk of the data is drawn are the classified official records of various elements of the Operations Directorate of the Joint Staff, especially the voluminous working files used by the Joint Battle Staff that were accumulated in the Current Actions Center of the NMCC. These are primary data in the most literal sense. They consist of messages, memoranda, and sundry other documents that represent most of the contemporary means by which command and control were actually articulated at the time. Contained among them are also much of the background considerations and immediate antecedents from which specific actions stemmed, as well as the consequences of those actions. The whole constitutes perhaps the best single source extant that approaches full coverage of what happened in the crisis.

9. Since the research phase was undertaken well before the crisis was over, many members of the J-3 staff, and others

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elsewhere in the JCS organization, who participated in the command and control activities described were interviewed while their recollection of events was still fresh. From them were elicited many important details not reflected in the formal record.

10. In addition, through the cooperation of the Services, much valuable material was made available that cast light on otherwise obscure areas. Particular mention should be made of the original logs, journals, and other documents provided by the Army War Room, CNO Flag Plot, and the Air Force Command Post. Although advantage was taken of unclassified official information that had been made public, most of the published open sources offered little new information and were used sparingly.

LIMITATIONS

11. Besides the restrictions imposed on access to certain classes of recorded data already noted, another limitation is the fact that some of the data most crucial to an understanding of what happened are irretrievable. Much of the command and control activity was conducted via communication means that leave no record. [The evidence suggests that direct secure voice channels, such as KY-9, were widely used.] These conversations were exclusive between the immediate individuals involved and no one else was privy to what transpired, unless one of the principals divulged it to his staff or a subsequent reference to the conversation appeared in a log or other document. There is reason to believe that some of the more formal communications that by their nature leave a hard-copy record, such as messages and memoranda, were post facto official confirmations of something conveyed earlier telephonically. An analogous research constraint exists with regard to personal contacts. As a result of these data limitations not every aspect of the analysis could be fully developed.

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OBSERVATIONS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO COMMAND AND CONTROL¹

PRECRISSIS POLICY AND PLANNING DEVELOPMENTS

12. Before the crisis, U.S. intelligence sensing was aware of the Soviet-sponsored military buildup in Cuba, but intelligence estimates did not expect it to include strategic offensive weapons systems. (Par. 80-83, 202, 203)

13. Intelligence evaluations and policy interpretations saw Cuban military developments in terms of their political implications, as jeopardizing the stability of Latin America -- not as a potential military threat directly to the U.S. itself. (Par. 112-125, 203, 204, 206, 207)

14. The U.S. precrisis policy response to the military developments in Cuba evolved gradually on an ad hoc basis. It took the form of indirect diplomatic and economic countermeasures. The policy had little success, and allies tended to be critical of it. (Par. 82-126 passim)

15. Military contingency planning for Cuba was undertaken long before the crisis, but its origins were independent of the main Cuban military buildup of late summer 1962. It had been initiated by Presidential directive immediately following and as a reaction to the Bay of Pigs experience of April 1961. (Par. 132-140, 190)

16. Contingency planning started from a single sharp focus as a straightforward invasion plan, but because of continuous national political requirements to reduce reaction times, progressively multiplied until by the eve of the crisis a "family" of plans was under way. (Par. 127-130, 133, 141-187 passim, 191-193)

¹Indicated within parentheses following each observation are references, by paragraph number, to appropriate portions of the DISCUSSION section of this enclosure that substantiate and amplify the statements made.

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17. All of the precrisis planning was oriented to a simple unequivocal contingency situation. It assumed a localized limited-war confrontation involving the U.S. and Cuba alone, in which vital U.S. interests would not be at stake, where the motivation for military action would be essentially preemptive, and in which the tactical initiative was a U.S. prerogative. The Soviet factor did not figure militarily in the determining assumptions. (Par. 129-137, 167-186, 195, 196)

18. The predominant influences governing contingency planning were the U.S. attitude toward Cuba's internal political system, which was never articulated in terms of firm policy objectives, and the local military circumstances of Cuban defense capability [in the event the U.S. undertook to change that system by force.] (Par. 132, 134, 161, 163, 167, 168, 173-177)

19. The impetus for most of the significant planning developments came from outside the military establishment. In each instance the national political authorities, usually the President or Secretary of Defense personally, were the prime movers who expressly directed that particular planning actions be accomplished. The characteristic process was for military objectives, force levels, the operational concept, and in some cases even the basic outline plan, to be determined in relatively explicit terms at the political level, then conveyed as instructions to the military establishment through the JCS. On occasion, political authorities stipulated specific operational provisions to be incorporated into the plans. (Par. 132-138, 141, 151-153, 167, 168, 174)

20. Most of the substantive planning was actually performed at the LANTCOM staff level and by the Service commands designated to become LANTCOM Service component commands. The Services themselves, although not in the direct chain of command, contributed

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importantly to the content of the plans. The JCS had largely an intermediary, and somewhat procedural, role between planning principals, i.e., as agent between those who levied planning requirements and those who fulfilled them. (Par. 139-141, 151-156, 161, 164, 198)

21. [Pre-crisis military contingency planning, in structure and functioning, was not tightly systematic. The pattern of command and control processes was correspondingly variable. As a result, the complex of incomplete and overlapping plans, rather than being a product of comprehensive programmed development, emerged piecemeal without benefit of a common overview or master design to lend focus and direction to their evolution.] (Par. 199, 200)

THE U.S. BASIC DECISION

[22. The precipitate onset of the crisis, and its unanticipated character, caught the U.S. by surprise. General war implications were inherent from the start. Covert discovery of the presence of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba had revealed a suddenly materialized strategic confrontation of the first order directly with the USSR, in which vital U.S. interests were threatened. The crisis situation at hand was quite different from the abstract model of a Cuban contingency such as had been contemplated in plans. (Par. 202-205)]

23. Because of the unexpected nature, gravity, and imminence of the threat, an immediate U.S. national response had to be devised on an ad hoc and short-term basis. The earlier broad policy objectives vis-a-vis Cuba were abruptly abandoned and the primary U.S. concern became limited to a return to the status quo ante missiles. (Par. 204, 207-212)

24. Two cardinal considerations shaped the formulation of the U.S. decision: the urgent need to deal with the threat before the missiles became fully operational; and fear that the situation

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[would escalate to a Soviet-U.S. nuclear exchange. Both the speed, and type of response were therefore crucial.] (Par. 208-213)

25. The decision-making process was highly centralized. It was taken out of the usual institutional channels as soon as the significance of the photographic evidence was recognized, and put into the hands of specific personalities at the very apex of national authority. The focus was the Executive Office, with the President immersed in every step of the process. Those directly involved in the decision-making group advising the President numbered very few and were almost exclusively civilian officials. The nucleus eventually narrowed to about eight individuals who were constituted into an Executive Committee of the NSC, the sole military member of which was the Chairman, JCS. (Par. 201, 206, 207, 213, 217)

26. The JCS itself, as a corporate body, had neither a direct nor central role in formulating the basic national decision. Only the Chairman participated in the NSC Executive Committee's deliberations. The Joint Staff, in the institutional sense, generated no formal staffed inputs designed to structure or influence the choice of alternatives. (Par. 206, 213, 217 and passim)

27. The basic national decision on the U.S. response began to emerge on 18 October, four days after the initial evidence of the crisis situation was acquired. Within two days, by the morning of 20 October, the response options had been weighed and the decision had crystallized to the extent of a consensus being reached by the Executive Committee of the NSC. The proposed course of action agreed upon was tentatively adopted by the President on the afternoon of the same day (20 October), and as implementing preparations got under way, the U.S. was rapidly committed de facto to the choice made. The commitment became formal two days later on the

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evening of 22 October, with the President's public disclosure of U.S. intentions. One week had elapsed between the time the issue first came to the attention of the national decision authority and the time when the course of action decided upon as the U.S. response went into effect. (Par. 213, 217, 221)

28. The basic national decision was, in essence, open-ended, namely, to employ minimum force initially yet be in a position to raise the scale to any level that circumstances might require. In effect, this concept amounted to responding in graduated stages, with the first course of action (imposition of the naval quarantine) but one step in a potential series of increasingly forceful measures. Within the framework of the basic decision, successive moves were to be contingent upon Soviet reaction to the first. Each subsequent decision juncture would be dealt with as it arose. (Par. 209-215)

29. The rationale underlying the open-ended decision to adjust progressively the U.S. response was that the Soviets would be forced thereby into a reactive role, with the burden of choice on them. They could either elect to disengage early at relatively little cost or, alternatively, risk allowing the confrontation to escalate to unknown proportions. (Par. 209-219, 223-231 passim)

COORDINATION WITH OVERSEAS UNIFIED COMMANDS AND ALLIES

30. Because of the need for secrecy and speed (in order to spring the U.S. response as a surprise before the missiles become operational), the basic national decision was arrived at and the opening course of action planned and launched unilaterally without prior consultation with Allies. For similar reasons, the overseas Unified Commanders were not formally apprised nor consulted until shortly before the decision was implemented. (Par. 232, 237, 287, 358)

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31. It was nevertheless imperative to coordinate with the overseas CINCs, particularly with those in areas potentially vulnerable to local Soviet countermoves. It was equally important to gain Allied political and military support in order to present a common global posture that would deter the USSR from risking escalation of the crisis. (Par. 223-230, 241, 349-351)

32. USCINCEUR and CINCARIB, the overseas Unified Commanders most immediately concerned, were especially hampered by the strategic requirement for surprise. Though the U.S. for once enjoyed the advantage of holding the initiative, the JCS were not authorized to alert and inform them of the developing situation in advance. Last-minute notification thus imposed the added handicap of little time available for planning and operational preparations in anticipation of possible repercussions in their areas. Besides the direct effect on readiness of assigned U.S. forces, it precluded timely military coordination with friendly forces of host countries. (Par. 241-246, 248-253, 292-299, 359)

33. In the case of CINCEUR, the constraints and obligations implicit in the existing U.S.-NATO relationship posed fundamental command and control dilemmas. On the political side, a certain degree of policy coordination was accomplished through the ad hoc means of the President personally communicating with key Allied leaders, and by a personal emissary of the President being sent to the North Atlantic Council.

[On the military side, however, a major strategic problem was to coordinate NATO-committed U.S. forces in Europe with the remainder of U.S. national forces elsewhere in connection with a contingency that geographically fell outside the sphere]

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[of primary alliance responsibility and interest. The problem was further compounded by the dual command role of the CINC concerned, who was both USCINCEUR and SACEUR.] (Par. 250-255, 265-293, 360)

34. [Over and above policy differences, specific technicalities arising from the NATO context created a special problem in relation to defense readiness.

[REDACTED]

(Par. 248-260)

35. [Somewhat analogous technicalities in coordinating defense readiness were encountered between U S forces and PCK forces in the context of the United Nations Command, Korea, as well as between CONAD forces and their Canadian counterpart in the context of NORAD.] (Par. 261-264)

36. In the case of CINCARIB, one of the chief coordination problems revolved around the limited CARIBCOM capabilities in relation to the extent of assistance that might be required by Latin American governments to suppress any Communist-inspired internal uprisings in support of Cuba. It was aggravated by the fact that the residual force resources of CINCSOUTH severely restricted the augmentation available. Another coordination problem attended implementing the U.S. policy objective of actual Latin American military participation in operations against Cuba. On both scores, complex politico-military arrangements had to be negotiated quickly, with each country involved having to be dealt with on an individual national basis. (Par. 284-347, 350)

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37. With respect to policy coordination, formal Allied political support of the U.S. position in the crisis was achieved when all of the Allied governments declared their official backing. In Latin America some military support was also obtained. But the NATO powers, because of standing attitudes on the Cuban issue and differing perceptions of the crisis threat, gave little military support to the overall deterrent posture. Of a lesser order, even coordination of U.S. military operational activities vis-a-vis Allies was conditioned by local policy reservations. (Par. 265-283, 284-290, 354-356)

38. Thus, a major constraint circumscribing the range and of national command and control abroad was the critical interrelationship between U.S.-oriented military considerations and prevailing foreign political factors. A clearly demonstrated concomitant was that these political variables tended to slow down the military command and control process.

IMPLEMENTING THE MILITARY COURSE OF ACTION

39. Because of the nature of the crisis situation and the U.S. decision in response to it, there were simultaneously four military operational dimensions to the crises. Besides the naval quarantine, which was the only operation (other than surveillance and reconnaissance activities) that was actually carried out, these were: preparation for defense of territorial COMUS, achieving general-war posture (including generation of SIOP forces), and readiness to implement the Cuban contingency plans. The structure and processes of military command and control were distinct for each and individually complex in their own right. The problem of keeping them properly synchronized with one another and, together, all in phase with political developments, exercised the total politico-military command and control system, from the White House to the forces in the field. (Par. 369-375, 511-512)

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40. The covert discovery of the missiles on 14 October had afforded the U.S. strategic warning of eight days. But from the military operational point of view it was nullified by the political necessity of maintaining secrecy in order to spring the U.S. response as a surprise on 22 October. (Par. 370-510, passim, 513)

41. The strategic warning did not confer an advantage on the invasion assault forces, who constituted overwhelmingly the largest proportion of forces affected. Although they were the ones who most needed advance warning, in view of the ponderous marshalling and staging necessary, they could least benefit from it, because the magnitude of activity would tip the U.S. hand and might be undesirably provocative. (Par. 454-492, 515-518)

42. Optimum mobilization had to give way in favor of projecting a national image of deliberate restraint balanced by firm determination. Ultimately, it was hoped, the purpose of military operational preparations would be symbolic as an earnest of U.S. intentions in the larger dialogue with the Soviet Union. (Par. 431, 519, 520)

43. However, the CONUS-based CINCs, i.e., LANT, SAC, CONAD, although not officially informed by the JCS of what the U.S. course of action would be until 21 October, were alerted to coming events early enough by the Services to permit staff preparations in anticipation of operational requirements, so that all were engaged in readiness activities by 17 October. USAF forces, especially, exploited to advantage the grace period; actual operational air deployments began on 17 October, well before a national decision had been reached. (Par. 378-510, passim, 514)

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44. [Fear of escalation created basic command and control dilemmas bearing directly upon operational preparations. The effect was at once to expand and narrow the scope, type, and degree of combat readiness required and permitted, because measures to deal with the local contingency inescapably impinged upon general-war issues. On the one hand, the Soviet military presence in Cuba made the consequences of otherwise conventional limited-war invasion or air attack unknown, and U.S. strategic posture for general war had to be prepared accordingly.]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] (Par. 426-431, 438-

451, 452, 494-510, 517-522)

45. [Rules of engagement, in terms of concrete application in specific circumstances, also constituted a major operational command and control problem area. There was a noticeable reluctance on the part of the JCS to make precommitting decisions defining the criteria for initiating, and the parameters for conducting, combat operations not explicitly covered in plans, especially regarding the critical issue of tactical response to hostile acts of the enemy. The guidance provided by the JCS that ostensibly was to govern U.S. reaction in the hypothetical exigency in question was sometimes so qualified as to be self-contradicting. Whatever handicapping effect this may have had operationally for the tactical forces involved, the resulting ambiguity tended to enhance centralized control at the highest level, for it insured that field commanders would in each instance have to seek authorization before taking a potentially serious move.] (Par. 392-396, 426-429, 523)

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46. Current operational activity connected with readiness preparations under which accounted for many urgent substantive problems to which the military command and control system had to address itself. Limitations in available resources, particularly forces, lift capability (land, sea, and air), and base facilities, required intensive re-scheduling of movements and revising of staging plans, which amounted to a complex secondary order of technical decision junctures. Monitoring the response of all the forces so affected in order to keep abreast of the status of readiness as a whole, posed extensive information requirements. In both respects, the burden of attendant command and control functions fell on the Joint Staff, specifically on J-3, as the focal common denominator embracing the various Service interests and command echelons involved. (Par. 378, 379, 416-425, 466, 467, 481, 483-490)

47. When operational conflicts arose between CINCs, as in the case of competing demands of LAANTCOM contingency air deployments against those of CONAD and SAC, coordination was effected at the JCS level. The degree of detail in which some of these problems had to be approached before they could be resolved by the JCS imposed correspondingly intensive ad hoc information and staffing support requirements on J-3. (Par. 358-309 passim)

48. Discrepancies between operational needs of a CINC and logistic resources and capabilities of a Service similarly had to be reconciled at the JCS level. Sometimes these required that the JCS render explicit rulings on the technical and tactical details of operational deployment for the CINC concerned. [In the process, because an appropriate ready data base was not normally maintained within the OJCS, J-3 had to improvise information retrieval and perform technical staffing to support the JCS disposition of the problem.] (Par. 411-425, 466-489)

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49. After initial operational readiness was achieved, maintaining it without degradation over a sustained period, while at the same time bringing the posture to the required full state of preparedness, continued to preoccupy the military command and control system. [Maximum readiness of total assault forces was not reached until the latter part of November.] In the interim, what adjustments were necessary to avoid undue force attrition, to rectify deficiencies, or to refine and improve special facets of operational readiness tended to be accomplished at a more decentralized level. During this second phase, the perspective of the JCS role gradually reverted to broader overall functions of conveying requirements, review, and approval. (Par. 450-453, 492, 502, 507-509)

QUARANTINE OPERATIONS

50. The limited, selective naval Quarantine that was actually implemented as the initial course of action in the U.S. response was essentially a form of military demonstration in support of diplomatic measures. Nevertheless, it constituted the most critical area of command and control of the entire crisis.

51. Since subsequent decisions on other political and military moves would be dependent in large measure upon Soviet reaction to the Quarantine, it was pivotal to the overall national strategy for dealing with the crisis. Quarantine operations accordingly received the intensive attention of national decision makers, and command and control related to them was subordinated to considerations other than military operational criteria alone. (Par. 524, 530, 531, 539-545, 669-673)

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52. Fundamental ad hoc adjustments to the established institutional command and control system were occasioned early in the crisis by the designation of the CNO to serve as JCS representative for the Quarantine. The effect was to shift the focus of quarantine command and control from the Joint Staff to OPNAV, thereby precipitating a series of secondary changes in staff organization and procedures. CNO Flag Plot assumed many of the functions connected with the Quarantine that normally would have been the responsibility of the Joint Battle Staff. This necessitated the creation within J-3 of a special "Blockade Group" to maintain liaison with OPNAV and keep the Chairman, JCS, the Director, Joint Staff, and other elements of OJCS informed on current developments in the Quarantine. (Par. 533-541, 565-574, 675-679)

53. In practice there were also significant procedural departures in the functioning of the Quarantine command and control system beyond those implied in the ad hoc modifications to its structure. At crucial junctures, the entire system was radically compressed; national decision makers preempted tactical command, bypassing intermediary command links, and would themselves exercise direct operational control over the immediate actions of Quarantine task force units. (Par. 680-684)

54. There were three instances of such real-time command and control of the details of tactical operations from the seat of government. The first was in connection with the principal targets for interception (Soviet Poltava-class ships) reversing course - when the Secretary of Defense, the CNO, and their

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[Deputies relayed explicit White House instructions via secure voice channel directly to commanders of ships assigned to carry out the intercepts.] (Par. 554-577, 591)

55. [A second instance of similar real-time national command and control was in connection with Soviet tankers, especially the BUCHAREST - when the CNO and his Executive conveyed White House guidance directly to quarantine task force elements.] (Par. 578-583)

56. [A third instance was in connection with non-Block vessels, particularly in the case of stopping and boarding the Soviet-chartered Lebanese freighter MARUCLA - when decisions governing the moment-by-moment operational moves of the specific quarantine ships involved were made by the Secretary of Defense and his Deputy acting on specific instructions of the President then communicated directly to the individual ship commander concerned.] (Par. 584-588)

57. An unanticipated additional mission for the quarantine task force was verification of Soviet withdrawal of its deployed missiles. The terms of the bilateral U.S.-Soviet inspection arrangements that were negotiated on the political level, however, covered in comprehensive detail the operational procedures to be followed. Command and control processes proved to be routine. (Par. 647-663, 685-687)

58. [The modest Latin American operational participation in the Quarantine occurred near the end of the crisis and was of little military significance.] The contributed ships were made part of a separate U.S. task force, and the only special command and control problem was providing each foreign ship

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with a U.S. communication liaison team having bilingual operators and appropriate cryptographic equipment. (Par. 616-636, 688-690)

CONTINGENCY PLANNING DURING THE CRISIS

59. Command and control considerations pervaded contingency planning during the crisis. The function of the plans themselves was essentially as a vehicle of command and control to optimize military responsiveness to national political direction. Concern at the political decision-making level with operational details deemed critical to the larger U.S. strategy in the crisis accounted for most of the planning activity and largely determined the content of the provisions that resulted.

60. The contingency plans became the midpoint on a projected spectrum of military courses of action ranging from the naval quarantine, on one extreme, to general war on the other. But because Cuba was the immediate locus of the crisis issue, the contingency plans remained central to the total U.S. response and were accordingly a major focus of attention for the entire national politico-military command and control complex. (Par. 502-555, 828)

61. Much the same general patterns as had been evident before the crisis characterized contingency planning experience during the crisis -- only they were more pronounced. A salient difference was in the greatly accelerated pace and intensity of the planning, but despite the changed context, the basic form and substance of the earlier plans were retained. The two types of contingency planning undertaken prior to the crisis, i.e., [for air-strike operations and invasion,] continued to be developed as two separate plans. [The basic air-strike plan]

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[was settled upon early, but owing to problems of meeting political requirements for minimal lead time, a single definitive version of the invasion plan did not effectively crystallize until the acute phase of the crisis was ending.]

(Par. 692, 693, 698-781 passim)

62. Neither of the two contingency plans ever reached final completion, but, owing to modifications and additions, were constantly in a state of transitional growth. Although individual portions gained specificity, the plans as a whole, rather than being narrowed by materialization of the crisis, progressively expanded in dimension and detail. The cumulative effect over time was a considerable transformation of the original plans. (Par. 693-696, 777-781)

63. The associated command and control processes also were similar to precrisis practice. As in other crisis-related military activity, the highest echelon of national political authority interposed itself into the contingency planning machinery. The dominant factors influencing the plans, besides the concrete limitations set by available military resources, proved to be assessments by political decision makers of the intrinsic military situation in Cuba; and interpretations by the same political decision makers of the significance of that military situation in terms of operational planning needs -- evaluation that did not always coincide with the views of the military. The typical role of the JCS was, as before the crisis, largely still that of intermediary agency between planning principals. (Par. 699 767, 787-793, 812, 819-837)

64. [Within the OJCS, the special "Cuban Planners" group was created in the Operations Directorate to deal with]

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Contingency planning matters exclusively. Organizationally separate from the Joint Battle Staff or regular Divisions and Branches of J-3, the Cuban Planners functioned independently of established channels and procedures. Rather than substantive planning, their job was one of monitoring and providing informational coordination and staffing support in connection with the plans. (Par. 714-724)

65. Within LANTCOM headquarters, as soon as tactical command for planned contingency operations was centralized to give CINCLANT operational control over all forces involved, a separate LANTCOM staff was formally activated to handle Cuban contingency responsibilities, including planning. The special contingency staff, however, did not function as intended. Instead, it was informally integrated into the regular permanent CINCLANT staff, which performed the Cuban staffing along with general-war staffing. (Par. 748-755)

66. Lack of unequivocal criteria for determining the approval status of basic plans, components, and changes at any given time made for an element of procedural ambiguity, potentially of far-reaching command and control consequence. Various kinds of approval, and inconsistencies in their application, sometimes made it impossible to know which particular planning provisions were currently governing and official. (Par. 699-712, 731, 803, 832, 833)

67. Stringent security restrictions imposed in the early stages of the crisis were an added constraint militating against full and timely dissemination of planning information to all the staffs and forces affected by the plans. The tendency persisted even after security restrictions were relaxed, and was especially evident in the use of the severely limiting "EXCLUSIVE FOR" device on messages crucially pertinent to planning. (Par. 717, 718, 753, 800-805, 834)

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68. The same themes that dominated precrisis contingency planning were the major planning problem areas during the crisis. All were traceable to command and control desiderata of the national political authority. [Centralizing of command relations was accomplished relatively early, but reduction of reaction times, discriminate force application, and augmentation of force levels, were more complicated and exercised a greater portion of the total national command and control system.] (Par. 697, 725-747)

69. [Compliance with recurrent White House insistence on minimizing the time lag between a political decision to execute military action and implementation of the action ordered placed a great strain on both contingency planning and operational readiness preparations. Crucial to the whole command and control process involved was reciprocal information exchange. As the number of planned specific courses of action multiplied, settling upon reaction times that were both politically acceptable and militarily feasible necessitated intensive coordination between planning and operations, and in the interim, occasioned no little confusion before the various reaction times were firmly codified and universally understood.] (Par. 797-812)

70. [Preoccupation with discriminate force application within the scope of the contingency plans reflected in microcosm the underlying strategic concern with escalation that characterized the whole U.S. approach to the crisis. The elaborate definition of selective options in ascending order of magnitude, coupled with austere reaction times, grew out of Presidential demands for precise and virtually instantaneous military response capability to implement predetermined operational courses of action, in discrete increments of specified kind and measure, on call. Such fine-grained choices from a range of programmed]

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[alternatives as was ultimately provided for in the contingency plans made for unprecedented national decision flexibility.]
(Par. 756-773, 843, 844)

71. Augmentation of force level commitments for contingency operations accounted for extensive planning modifications throughout the crisis period. The steady force increase was partly related to order-of-battle intelligence factors, and in part to planning refinements designed to accommodate secondary or peripheral requirements or to cover more remote exigencies that might conceivably occur. The chief motivation, however, was the desire on both operational and policy levels to insure adequate safety margins. On the one hand, tactical commanders on various echelons were inclined to add, on their own initiative, combat strength in excess of what they were authorized to deploy, and the plans would subsequently be adjusted accordingly. On the other, political decision makers, remembering the Bay of Pigs experience, formally directed further large-scale augmentation, even in the face of military advice to the contrary. (Par. 766, 814-827, 838-841)

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(Par. 787-794)

73. In view of the nature of some of the planning issues dealt with, the essential information requirements for staffing support

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of many planning actions were fundamentally in the realm of judgment. Some of the information inputs demanded of the military command and control system amounted to hypotheses in a subjunctive mode, rather than hard data in the sense of verifiable facts. (Par. 767-769, 787-792, 799)

TERMINATION OF THE CRISIS

74. Successful resolution of the crisis was achieved primarily through diplomatic measures conducted at the national political level. The specific means employed were bilateral communications in the form of a dialogue involving an exchange of messages between the U.S. and USSR heads of state. Military command and control had no direct participating role in the actual dialogue itself. (Par. 845-873)

75. [On the eve of the Soviet concession to withdraw the missiles, the military command and control system did expressly attempt to influence national decision making regarding the next U.S. move. In the light of the continuing missile buildup, the JCS, as a corporate body but minus the Chairman, formally proposed implementing the contingency plans in 24 hours unless there were in the meantime evidence of Soviet compliance to remove the missile threat. The Chairman disagreed with the JCS position and independently submitted his own separate recommendation that, instead, the U.S. wait longer for further Soviet reactions.] The incident revealed a conjuncture of two different orders of command and control activity bringing into conflict the Chairman's dual role as an integral part of one institutional command and control system (the military) and his simultaneous ad hoc functions as a member of another (the rational political). As he felt constrained to explain in his dissenting memorandum, the Chairman had been unable to participate in the JCS deliberations because at the time he was at the White House functioning in a staff capacity as the military member of the NSC Executive Committee. (Par. 873-875)

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76. Attending the gradual military unwinding that characterized the termination of the crisis were many command and control requirements, though progressively less urgent and less crucial. A series of decisions and complex operational coordination was necessary to maintain a balanced and orderly stand-down of operational readiness in phase with political developments, the military significance of which was not always clear at the time. Concomitant with the return toward normal precrisis posture was a decrease in intimate participation by national political decision makers in the immediate operational details of reducing military readiness. (Par. 845, 876-883)

77. As tensions eased and the crisis subsided, the ad hoc military command and control adjustments were abandoned, although not necessarily to revert to precrisis arrangements. Within the Operations Directorate of the Joint Staff, particularly, a number of basic changes in command and control organization and procedures were put into effect even before the crisis was over. (Par. 884-897)

78. Throughout the crisis, the military command and control system, including that portion represented by the OJCS, had been confined almost exclusively to technical military matters following on decisions already rendered by national political authorities. There was little tendency on the part of the Executive Office to relinquish centralized control and delegate autonomous prerogatives along institutional lines to the military establishment in its own traditional sphere of vested interest. Generally, most of the managerial initiative shaping the U.S. military response was exercised at the very apex of government.

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION: PRECRISIS U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA

79. During the first three years of Castro's rule in Cuba, it became quite clear that the Soviet Union fully recognized the advantages to be derived from a Cuba hostile to the United States. In the increasingly exacerbated course of U.S.-Cuban relations during these years, Cuba became the recipient of Soviet moral and material support. The latter, in the form of economic aid and military equipment, was relatively modest in scope, and probably had a greater symbolic than actual impact. It was a marked change in this pattern which led to the missile crisis of 1962.

A. THE SOVIET BUILDUP IN CUBA

80. The commencement of unusually large shipments of arms to Cuba from the Bloc nations in the early summer of 1962 brought the Cuban question to the forefront again after a considerable period of Caribbean quiescence. Arms, industrial materials, military advisors, and civilian technicians began to pour suddenly into the island. Shortly, there began the swelling flow of intelligence reports to the U.S. which indicated that more than the usual ground combat and aircraft weapons, of a type which Cuba had been receiving for the previous two years from the Bloc, were now being moved in. (For further discussion of the details of intelligence developments, see paragraphs 201-206 below.)

81. President Kennedy made the first public statement in regard to the increased flow of men and materiel at his press conference on August 22.¹ 31 days later, Tass, the Soviet News Agency, announced that the volume of shipments from the Soviet Union to Cuba in 1962 would be double that of 1961 and that, at the moment, ten Soviet ships and five of West German, Norwegian, Greek, and Italian registry were on their way to

¹New York Times, August 23, 1962.

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Cuba.¹ On September 2, the Soviets confirmed what had been known by announcing an agreement to supply arms to Cuba and to provide specialists to train the Cuban armed forces.²

82. These developments produced a growing pressure within American official circles for strong measures against Cuba, including invasion of the island to destroy the Soviet Base in embryo. Such forceful action, however, required more concrete information and evidence than was currently possessed. Furthermore, political reactions, in the light of the abortive expedition to the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, had to be considered.

83. Consequently, U.S. declaratory policy was to rule out invasion, but to keep up a relentless pressure, with the economic embargo the U.S. had placed on Cuba, to isolate the island, and to allow and to help internal forces build up to the point where the Castro government could be overthrown. The President himself ruled out invasion in an August 29 press conference, in a reply to suggestions from Congressional sources that the U.S. invade Cuba because the presence of Soviet troops had violated the Monroe Doctrine.³ However, the President did follow up with another statement on September 4, after consultation with Congressional leaders, declaring that the U.S. will use "whatever means may be necessary" to prevent Cuba from exporting "its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force against any part of the Western Hemisphere." He stated that "there is no evidence of any organized combat force from any Soviet Bloc country; of military bases provided to Russia ... of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles Were it to be otherwise, the gravest issues would arise."⁴

84. Over the long term, U.S. policy was even more emphatic. On September 30, the Vice-President, Mr. Johnson, defined the U.S.

¹New York Times, August 29, 1962.

²New York Times, September 3, 1962.

³New York Times, August 30, 1962.

⁴New York Times, September 5, 1962.

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aim in Cuba as getting rid of Castro and Soviet influence. Ambassador Stevenson said on October 8 in a statement to the United Nations in regard to U.S.-Cuban policy, that the "maintenance of communism is not negotiable."¹

85. However, for the moment, the U.S. would depend upon non-military measures to hamper, if not prevent, the flow of arms to Cuba. For these measures to have effect, the cooperation of our European and Latin American Allies would be indispensable.

B. ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT AMERICAN POLICY

86. That a large part of the Soviet commerce with Cuba was carried in Free World bottoms was painfully clear to American decision makers. On September 10, 1962, the Chief of Naval Operations reported that since January 1, 1962, 169 Free World ships had made 246 trips in the Cuban trade under 175 charters fixed by the Sino-Soviet Bloc.² The New York Times reported on September 28 that of the slightly more than 1000 merchant ship calls at Cuba between January 1 and September 1, 1962, only about 275 were by Bloc ships. Nearly 500 were by ships operated and owned by Free World owners. In the same period, Free World ships carried about 56 percent of the Soviet oil on which Cuba depended. Free World ships also carried almost 80 percent of the dry cargo received by Cuba. However, almost none of the Free World ships carried arms, and the ships of some western Allies had increasingly eschewed "strategic goods."

87. The U.S. in August had consulted with NATO allies whose shipping firms had chartered vessels to the Bloc, but by mid-September it was apparent no major gains had been made. The Governments of Britain, West Germany, and Norway had begun inquiries among their shipowners, but these were generally regarded as polite responses to U.S. diplomatic pressure, and centered on the question of whether Allied ships were carrying arms among their cargoes to Cuba. U.S. officials attempted to point out

¹New York Times, October 9, 1962.

²JCS 2304/62, 1 October 1962, SECRET.

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to these Governments that the use of Allied ships for even ordinary goods carriage to Cuba released that many Bloc ships for arms delivery.¹

88. American dissatisfaction with the situation was startlingly formalized on September 20 when the House of Representatives approved the foreign aid bill, including amendments which would cut off all aid both to states whose ships carried arms to Cuba, or which sold or furnished arms or supplies of strategic value like petroleum, and to states whose ships carried just items of economic assistance to Cuba. While the Senate, on October 1, voted to restore the President's discretionary power in the second category, to determine whether or not such withholding of aid would be contrary to the national interest, the depth of American concern and intent was made manifest.²

89. In the second half of September, some small progress appeared to be made in enlisting the support of Western European Governments in measures to restrict the use of their shipping by the Soviets in the Cuban arms traffic. On September 23, Secretary of State Rusk met with the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Home, to discuss the embargo, and then conferred with Norwegian officials the following day. On the 25th the British Government officially advised British shipowners to refrain from carrying arms to Cuba, and five days later the President and Lord Home issued a joint statement in regard to the serious nature of recent developments in Cuba.³

90. However, the only concrete success American diplomacy scored was the announcement on September 27th by the Turkish Foreign Minister that Turkish shipowners had agreed to halt all cargo shipments to Cuba. This was hardly a major blow to the Cuban trade.

¹New York Times, September 15, 1962.

²Department of State Outgoing Circular Telegram 655, October 12, 1962, UNCLASSIFIED.

³New York Times, October 1, 1962.

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91. Lack of success led the Administration into consideration of harsher and far-reaching embargo measures. An interesting memorandum from the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of Defense on September 20th enclosed a letter for the President in regard to a "study on a declaration barring ships in the Cuban trade from entering U.S. ports." The letter suggested several nonnaval courses of action which could have the effect of naval actions. The least effective measure was a Presidential Declaration that ships calling at Cuban ports may not call at U.S. ports immediately thereafter or for a specific period thereafter. Since only 144 of the 575 Free World ships engaged in the Cuban trade had subsequently called at U.S. ports in the past two years, ship operators could probably live with this ruling by adjusting their schedules to cover the period of ostracism.

92. A second suggestion was a Presidential Declaration that all ships engaged in the Cuban trade were barred from U.S. ports until further notice. Such an act would have an inhibiting long-range economic implication of varying intensity for each of the approximately 70 beneficial owners of the 575 ships. The inhibiting effect could be heightened by requesting Western countries, especially Latin America, to make similar rulings regarding ships not of their own registry and not specifically protected by treaty. Some of the beneficial owners who could easily operate a few ships to Cuba without using U.S. ports would be greatly inhibited by the financial burden of having to bring these ships home empty and in ballast from the Western Hemisphere. A lesser but significant degree of refinement could be obtained by just circulating reports that such a request to Latin American states was under consideration.

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93. The third and most effective recommendation would be a declaration that no ships belonging to the beneficial owners of any ships calling at Cuba would be allowed into U.S. ports until further notice. This action would have amounted to black-listing owners and their entire fleets if a single ship called at Cuba. Such a declaration would admittedly be difficult but not impossible to enforce. These then, were some of the policy options open to the U.S.

94. The Secretary of the Navy pointed out that, from the Navy's point of view, all three courses of action were legal, but there must also be taken into account the opinions of all other Government agencies in regard to subsidiary effects upon U.S. trade, foreign relations generally, and hemispheric economic relations specifically.¹

95. The ultimate choice of means was a combination and drastic extension of the Navy's suggestions. On October 3 the U.S. delegate informed the North Atlantic Council of NATO that the U.S. Government would launch the following "Four Point Action Program" next week: (1) Close all U.S. ports to all ships of any country if any ship under that flag thereafter carried arms to Cuba; (2) Direct that no U.S. Government cargo shall be carried on a foreign flag ship if any ship of the same owners is used hereafter in the Bloc-Cuban trade; (3) Direct that no U.S. flag ship and no U.S.-owned ship shall carry goods to and from Cuba, and (4) Close all U.S. ports to any ship that on the same continuous voyage was used or is being used in Bloc-Cuban trade. The U.S. delegate reiterated that these proposals reflected the continuing seriousness with which the U.S. Government, Congress, and the American public viewed the

¹Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, from the Secretary of the Navy, 20 September 1962, SECRET.


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Cuban shipping problem and the importance we attached to making the Soviet build-up as expensive and difficult as possible. The U.S. recognized that these measures may cause problems for shipping companies in some NATO countries, but we hoped that the NATO Governments would be able to persuade them to make adjustments. The OAS was informed of these measures by the Secretary of State on October 2.¹


96. While the first reports indicated that North Atlantic Council representatives had seemed to appreciate the seriousness of the U.S. presentation, reactions to the forthcoming measures were obviously mixed. A major success was achieved, the first one in regard to Free World shipping, when on October 10, the Greek Shipowners Union in Athens announced that it would recommend to its members a total embargo on cargo shipments to Cuba. Since the U.S. Maritime Administration had but recently revealed that Greece had led the list of twenty-two Free World countries whose ships were conveying Communist cargoes to Cuba, with 97 ships of the 432² involved, this appeared to be a step in the right direction.

97. However, in the case of Britain which came second on the list with 77 ships, the reaction was different. British shipowners in London decided unanimously on October 11 to oppose any U.S. restrictions on their trade with Cuba. Press reaction to the American policies was hostile, and



¹Department of State, Circular Telegram 380, 3 October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

²New York Times, October 1, 1962.



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98. To counteract such attitudes the State Department sent out a cable defining the "U.S. Four Point Action Regarding Cuban Shipping." The telegram summarized the nonmilitary stage that had been reached in U.S. policy just before the receipt, three days later, of positive intelligence of Soviet offensive weapons abruptly turned American efforts toward more forceful measures. U.S. policy, it stated, was intended: (1) to deny the Bloc and Cuba access to Free World shipping for use in arms shipments to Cuba; (2) to make the Bloc-Cuban trade as costly as possible for Free World shipowners by denying their ships engaged in that trade the opportunity to call at U.S. ports on the same voyage; (3) to compel shipowners and operators to elect between engaging in Bloc-Cuban trade and in carrying cargoes financed by the U.S., such as foreign aid cargoes, shipments of surplus agricultural commodities under Public Law 480, and Department of Defense cargoes.

99. The message concluded by stating that it was not the American objective at this time to achieve by unilateral action a complete embargo on Free World trade with Cuba. The U.S. itself did permit exports to Cuba of certain food-stuffs and medical supplies. However, the efforts of other countries to curb trade and especially to prevent or discourage the use of vessels under their registry from engaging in trade would be consistent with U.S. objectives and would be welcomed by the U.S.²

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Department of State Circular Telegram 648, October 11, 1962, *11/14*
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100. The message was clearly making a fine distinction, since the measures proposed, if effectively implemented, would have produced a situation very close to a complete embargo.

101. However, there was a limit to concern for our Allies. A State Department cable of a few days earlier had stated that the Department wished to make clear that although it wanted to hear of significant reactions, in this case from Latin America, to the U.S. Four Point Action program, adoption of the measures was not dependent upon the reactions of others. The U.S. Government would take these¹ measures.

102. This, then, was the nonmilitary aspect of U.S.-NATO relations over Cuba. There was, however, another aspect to the relationship.

C. CUBA AND BERLIN

103. Until late in the summer, American decision-makers appear to have considered Berlin the next most likely crisis area rather than Cuba. The impression given in Washington was that a new crisis in Berlin might have to be faced by the turn of the year, assuming Khrushchev kept his promise not to sign a peace treaty until after the American elections. The apparent U.S. insistence upon keeping the subject current led to some puzzlement among observers. In view of the widespread doubts that the Soviets would actually start a new Berlin crisis in the near future, it could be surmised that the U.S. objective was to warn the Soviets of U.S. resolve, and by keeping the subject current, to prepare the American public for the possible threat of war in the coming future.

¹Department of State Circular Telegram 599, October 5, 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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104. Berlin remained the subject of greatest U.S. and NATO public attention until virtually the very day of the President's proclamation of the Cuban quarantine. In fact, the six-and-a-half-hour conversation between the President and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko on October 18, in the midst of preparations for the U.S. Cuban move, dealt in greater part with Berlin. On the 17th Washington sources had indicated too that Khrushchev was due to visit the U.N. and to see the President the following month in order to discuss Berlin.

105. It was obvious that American decision makers conceived of a direct relationship between Cuba and Berlin. The development of the Soviet base in Cuba could be viewed as a pawn to be used in the greater game over Berlin, even if no offensive weapons had been introduced. The possibility of the introduction of these weapons made the relationship all the more certain and critical.

106. Secretary of State Rusk, in a briefing to a joint session of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Forces Committees on September 17, pointed out the "direct relationship" between events in Cuba and Berlin, particularly in the next three months. It is interesting to note that in the discussion which ensued, an analogy was drawn by the Senators between the Cuba and Berlin relationship and the impact of the British-French invasion of Suez on the Soviet decision to go all the way in smashing the Hungarian insurrection in early November 1956. (Curiously, these two most critical crises of the decade were to coincide almost to the day, six years apart). The theory expressed was that the West's invasion of Egypt distracted world attention from Budapest, permitting the Russians a freer hand.¹

¹New York Times, September 18, 1962.

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107. In the light of public discussion of the Cuba-Berlin relationship, it was inevitable that public speculation should develop over the possibility of a "deal" between the U.S. and the Soviets. Cuba also became linked in this speculation with the U.S. base system overseas. However, on September 30, the Secretary of State, in a press conference, categorically rejected the idea of a deal with the Soviet Union under which the Soviets would withdraw from Cuba in return for the U.S. closing down some of its overseas bases. The Secretary declared this was not a negotiable point, and that the principle that freedom cannot be supported in one place by surrender of freedom in another would also apply to any effort to link Cuba with a settlement on Berlin.¹

108. The Soviets took the same line, Izvestia on October 17 denying rumors that the Soviets were sponsoring a deal, and rejecting the idea of any effort to link Cuba to either Berlin or to the U.S. overseas bases.²

109. While U.S. officials denied that there existed any negotiable link between Cuba and West Berlin, they also persistently warned that there was a "factual link," in the sense that action in one place might become the signal for counteraction in the other.

110. The effect of these speculations and exchanges upon the NATO Allies cannot be fully identified, but it seems clear that part of their unsympathetic attitude toward U.S. Cuban policy had its roots in fears that the American "obsession" with Cuba would blind the U.S. to the really vital situation in Berlin. It was felt that the U.S.


¹New York Times, October 1, 1962.

²New York Times, October 12, 1962.

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"creation" of a crisis in Cuba would invite Soviet pressure in Europe and thus provoke the very crisis we were seeking to delay if not avoid in Berlin.

111. This sensitivity to the Cuba-Berlin relationship revealed itself clearly in the widely held expectation, once the Quarantine had been announced on October 22, that the most likely place for a Soviet counterpressure would be in Berlin. The very fact that the President, in his address on October 22, specifically warned the Soviets against interfering with U.S. access to Berlin or against any other "hostile moves" suggests the weight which U.S. policy makers attached to the relationship.



D. LATIN AMERICAN STATES AND U.S.-CUBAN POLICY

112. The interest of the Latin American states in the new American policy toward Cuba was not so much mercantile as political. For some, those states in or bordering on the Caribbean, there was also a military interest, since they had been the objects of the several Castro-inspired little filibustering expeditions around the Caribbean in previous years. At the governmental level at least there existed in these states a strong antipathy toward Castro's Cuba. On the other hand, the major Caribbean state, Mexico, had shown itself most cool toward earlier U.S. efforts to penalize Cuba.

113. The rapid growth of Cuban military power during the year had shaken complacency and tolerance. Consequently, when Secretary of State Rusk met with the Ambassadors of nineteen Latin American states on September 5, his

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declaration of U.S. determination to prevent the export of Communism from Cuba was well received. There was apparently full unanimity with the President's "containment policy" that would involve the use of whatever means might be necessary to prevent aggression by Cuba against any part of the Western Hemisphere.¹

114. A more specific statement of U.S. policy was made by the Secretary of State on September 26 to the Foreign Ministers of Chile, Haiti, Peru, and Venezuela. The Secretary reviewed the Cuban situation, emphasizing the rapid Soviet build-up. He stated that if it should become necessary for the U.S. to take military action, only three or four hours' preparation would be required to reduce the effectiveness of the Soviet war materiel so far received since July. If it should be necessary to use force, the U.S. would use the maximum nonnuclear violence in order to minimize time and casualties. However, the U.S. was anxious to avoid this course since it would leave lasting wounds both in Cuba and elsewhere.

115. For this last reason, the U.S. was currently pursuing the objective of making Soviet involvement in Cuba as expensive and as unprofitable as possible for the Soviet Union by measures which would further isolate Cuba and exert maximum nonviolent pressure on the Soviet Union. He strongly emphasized that the U.S. was not objecting to whatever type social and economic system the Cuban people might freely choose, but only to Soviet intervention there and to Soviet-Cuban intervention in Latin America.

¹New York Times, September 6, 1962.

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115. The Secretary stressed that the U.S. was unwilling to negotiate the Cuban problem with the Soviet Union. Because of special inter-American relationships and agreements, the Cuban situation was in no way comparable to or linkable with situations elsewhere, such as Berlin or U.S. military assistance relationships with other free countries like Turkey. He stressed that the U.S. was not seeking to import the cold war into this hemisphere or to drag the OAS into problems not their responsibility. The Soviet Union had brought the cold war to the hemisphere. In conclusion, Mr. Rusk pointed out the intense preoccupation of the American people with Cuba and asked his Latin American colleagues that this be taken into account in their thinking as a current basic political fact of life in the United States.¹

117. To gain further support for a stronger U.S. policy, the U.S. called an informal meeting of all Latin American foreign ministers to be held in Washington, October 2-3. The invitation was sent specifically to discuss the Cuban situation in the light of the Soviet build-up there, the tempo of which had increased steadily throughout September. The U.S. Secretary of State reviewed recent developments and the U.S. response in the setting of a worldwide Communist offensive. He expressed the view that the Soviet Union would not go to war over Cuba, but reassured the OAS ministers that in the event of a sneak attack on the U.S. or elsewhere, the U.S. would still be able to destroy the Soviet Union. He invited their views on how to make the

¹Department of State, Telegram to U.S. Mission at U.N., September 27, 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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Bloc's supplying of Cuba more difficult and costly and how to demonstrate that Communist action in Cuba would not affect hemisphere solidarity. In this last point he was backed strongly by the Foreign Ministers.¹

118. It is interesting to note that the sense of the Secretary's comments at this meeting closely resembled comments he had made a week earlier, in his references to military action. [It would appear that a positive effort was being made to alert the OAS to the possibility of military assault against Cuba if the situation there continued down the same path.]

119. There was a military side to the conference, for which U.S. planning provides an interesting background for the concept of U.S.-Latin American military cooperation which emerged during quarantine operations a month later. In fact, these ideas are shown to have been under consideration for some length of time.

120. Prior to the conference, the President had let it be known to the CJCS that he desired to adopt a strong position on CoCo, and wished a number of points to be raised at the conference in the military field. These were to include the need for an increased air-sea surveillance of Cuba and its approaches on both unilateral and multinational basis; the establishment of sea-air surveillance of the coasts of Caribbean states, on a multinational basis, to prevent infiltration; the establishment of more active counter-subversion activities by the Caribbean states, to include exchange of information between countries and with the surveillance force.²

¹Department of State Circular, Telegram 377, October 3, 1962.
CONFIDENTIAL.

²JCS 2304/61, 23 September 1962, SECRET.

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121. The President's points were clearly designed to further the U.S. policy of isolating Cuba and limiting her ability to engage in mischief-making with her newly acquired Soviet weapons. (As early as May 1962, the JCS had expressed concern to CINCARIB and CINCLANT over the possible Cuban utilization of eighteen newly received patrol and motor torpedo craft in landing subversive personnel around the Caribbean, and had directed them to organize a system of control and surveillance.)¹

122. The CJCS in his reply first warned that in the preparation of a public political statement to be issued by the Foreign Ministers, there be no mention of invasion or the use of blockade as a major means of handling Cuba, suggesting that instead, discussion should be concentrated on actions designed to prevent the export of Communism.

123. The Chairman pointed out that the JCS had already taken actions along these lines in August 1962, having directed CINCARIB and CINCLANT to develop a U.S. alerting system to include anti-infiltration phases in all exercises and to encourage Caribbean states to develop country alerting systems with plans for opposing subversive infiltrations. However, the foregoing actions were clearly dependent upon participation of the states concerned, and the U.S. position at the meeting should, therefore, lay emphasis on these actions and invite greater participation.

124. In regard to the President's aforementioned three points of interest, the Chairman noted that U.S. military forces provided what was felt to be adequate surveillance, and, if necessary,

¹JCS Message 4446, to CINCARIB, CINCLANT, 091046Z, May 1962, SECRET.

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could alone extend it, since the Caribbean states would be hard pressed to provide surveillance of their own coasts. If it were considered politically desirable to elicit surveillance contributions, Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia were capable of providing assistance. He warned that creation of a multinational force would require that contributing nations be provided with additional fuel and spare parts support.

125. The Chairman recalled that the JCS had given its position on a multinational patrol on two previous occasions, namely, that the military advantages would not be significant. Nevertheless, this position need not preclude encouraging cooperation among the Caribbean states, and the central theme of the U.S. at the meeting should be to encourage a marked unilateral effort and multinational cooperation in the maximum utilization of existing facilities and forces.¹

126. In retrospect, the American political and military positions were revealed with both clarity and fullness to the OAS at this conference. There could be no mistaking U.S. intentions toward Cuba, presuming the will to execute the declaratory policy existed.

11-977-62, 24 September 1962, SECRET.

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II. PRECRISIS MILITARY CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONTINGENCY PLANNING

127. The main vehicle of preparation for the Cuban crisis was the military contingency plans. Long before the event, relatively elaborate planning had been undertaken in anticipation of a contingency arising that would require U.S. military action against Cuba. This planning was in process when the crisis came.

128. For the preceding period of well over a year, as the general Cuban situation worsened, a growing sense of urgency progressively accelerated the pace of contingency planning, while the scope of the plans enlarged and the scale of operations provided for expanded. By the eve of the crisis, there existed a body of contingency plans in various stages of development, some completed and formally adopted, others being formulated, undergoing revision, or awaiting review and approval. Among them were not a few unreconciled inconsistencies. Together these plans constituted, to the extent that they were developed, the prepared point of departure for a U.S. military response to a Cuban contingency.

129. The compass of these precrisis contingency plans was intended to be comprehensive. Within the bounds of the contingency postulated, the range of optional courses of action under consideration was fully expected to cope with whatever the contingency presented. [When the actual contingency materialized, the resulting plans were found to be less than all-inclusive and fell short of accommodating the entire military dimensions of the total crisis. Furthermore, over and above limitations of concept, the state of the planning at the time the crisis occurred proved less than propitious for]

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[Generating the explicit plans needed immediately in the heat of the moment. The deficiencies were attributable to the basic premises underlying the substance of the plans and to the way the planning function was carried out.]

130. [None of the working assumptions on which precrisis plans were predicated took into account the possibility of a contingency of strategic proportions in a general war context. Nor did the conduct of the planning, with its ever-changing terms of reference, permit a systematic program of orderly integration and follow-through of the various plans initiated. Nevertheless, different as the character of the real contingency turned out to be, and despite its inopportune timing in relation to the status of the planning, the complex of plans addressed to the hypothetical situation was not rendered invalid. With appropriate modification, plans applicable to one of the major military aspects of the crisis eventually emerged. These precrisis contingency plans, thus, although not oriented specifically to the kind of conditions to which they had to apply, were in the direct line of evolution leading to those that became current and in effect during the crisis.]

131. In view of their formative role in influencing subsequent crisis experience, it is necessary to trace the ontogeny of the precrisis plans and reconstruct the contemporary environment in which planning developments occurred. In the course of isolating the impetus, rationale, and circumstances of particular planning actions taken, significant command and control phenomena bearing upon contingency planning processes can be identified.

B. ORIGIN OF THE CUBAN CONTINGENCY PLANS

132. [The contingency military operation plans for Cuba had all evolved from reaction to a specific traumatic experience.]

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~~REF ID: A662304/34~~, 2 May 1961, TOP SECRET

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Criteria that would apply, and specified the means that were authorized to achieve U.S. military objectives. To carry out the tactical phase of the invasion, the plan provided for the employment of 60,000 troops, excluding naval and air units, but stipulated that all the forces involved, whether land, sea, or air, were to be drawn from existing force levels. Reflecting the President's cardinal requirement, the strength of the force commitment was presumed adequate to give a high degree of assurance of success. In the light of Cuban capabilities as estimated at the time, the allocated force was deemed sufficiently massive to discourage or overcome resistance and permit ground offensives to be conducted at such a pace as to secure effective control of the island in an estimated eight days. Execution of the plan would require a lead-time of twenty-five days from the date of decision to the commencing of D-Day assaults.

135. On 29 April 1961 the President, meeting with the Secretary of Defense and the Chief of Naval Operations, reviewed Contingency Plan 1. He approved the general outline of the plan, but demurred with respect to what he considered an unduly long reaction time. Rejecting the twenty-five-day interval provided for between decision and execution, he requested that the lead-time period be drastically reduced, suggesting no more than a week as being desirable. Otherwise, the plan was adopted, and the President directed that the preparation of appropriate detailed military operation plans to implement the national plan be undertaken accordingly.

JCS 2304/34, 2 May 1961, TOP SECRET.

Memo, SecDef to JCS, "Cuban Contingency Plans", 1 May 1961, TOP SECRET.

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136. Henceforth, the issue of reaction time first raised by the President on 29 April 1961 would dominate Cuban contingency planning. The discrepancy between ideal political requirements, on the one hand, and realistic considerations of military operational feasibility, on the other, was never reconciled; but efforts to close the gap lent unforeseen complications to the planning task. The President's demand also marked the beginning of a pattern that was to persist until the 1962 crisis was over. Intensive political direction in technical military operational matters proved to be a salient characteristic of how the U.S. response was managed. B.H. D.

137. On 1 May the Secretary of Defense, in a memorandum to the JCS, instructed that the "Joint Staff and CINCLANT" be assigned responsibility for preparing the necessary detailed military plan to carry out the course of action prescribed in the national plan. Besides specifying the terms of reference outlined in Contingency Plan 1, and those expressly laid down by the President when he reviewed it on 29 April, the Secretary added guidelines of his own. Citing the requirement regarding lead-time, he emphasized that the military plan be designed to minimize the time necessary for executing the operational response after an order was received. This reaction time, he had determined, should be five days. Finally, he also directed that the plan provide for maximum information security during the intervening period between a decision to invade and the actual assault. I

138. Thereafter, special security precautions were clamped down on all planning activity regarding Cuba. Within JCS --

Memo, SecDef to JCS, "Cuban Contingency Plans," 1 May 1961

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War reproduces a comprehensive collection of records from the archives of the three key governments involved in the most dangerous confrontation of the Cold war. Declassified records from the United States, Russia and Cuba significantly advance analysis of the historical foundations of the missile crisis, the policy calculations and considerations of President John F. Kennedy and premiers Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro, and the overt and covert military and paramilitary operations that combined to bring the world to the threshold of a nuclear exchange. Topics extensively covered in the documentation include the failed U.S.-led invasion at the Bay of Pigs, renewed attempts to overthrow Castro through Operation Mongoose and Operation Northwoods, U.S. military contingency planning for conflict with Cuba, naval warfare, Soviet and Cuban decision making and communications during the crisis, and the repercussions for U.S.-Soviet relations, and Soviet-Cuban relations in its aftermath. Materials were identified, obtained, assembled and indexed by the National Security Archive, a non-profit Washington D.C. based research institute and library. The microfiche collection is accompanied by a printed guide and index.

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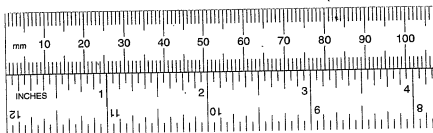
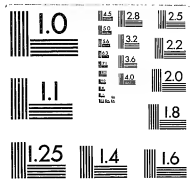
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1 and presumably in other interested agencies as well -- these activities were carried on outside the established organizational framework. An exclusive task-force-type group (informally referred to as the "Johnson Task Force"), whose very existence was kept under wraps, was created and functioned in shadowy isolation from the regular affairs of the various divisions and branches of JCS Directorates. Separate procedures were followed in order to limit the number of people who might have access to information that was now considered extra sensitive. From then on, anything pertaining to Cuba was so closely held that only a few designated individuals were privy to what was going on. The rigid security measures that had been imposed acquired, through time, an inertia which was never completely overcome even in the midst of the crisis, when pressing operational needs of the moment demanded somewhat broader access to the data expressly prepared for just such an eventuality.]

130. [A week after the Secretary of Defense memorandum, on 8 Mar 1961, the Director, Joint Staff, held a conference with CINCLANT representatives in which he gave oral planning guidance, specifying among other things the requirement for a [five-day] reaction time.¹ These terms of reference were confirmed the next day in the JCS message of 9 May that formally directed CINCLANT to produce the contingency plan.²

140. There was already in existence a not unrelated plan, CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN (Cuba) 312-61. It had been approved by JCS on 10 March 1961, superseding an even earlier one contained in CINCLANT OPLAN 310/60, a general regional contingency plan of which Appendix II to Annex "G" pertained |

¹JCS 2304/34, 2 May 61, TOP SECRET.

²Message, JCS to CINCLANT, 505627, 091728Z, May 61, TOP SECRET.

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[to Cuba. The principal difference between the two was that the newer plan provided for increased forces and an expanded operational concept.¹ Though even more ambitious planning was now under way as a result of the President's directive, CINCLANT OPLAN (Cuba) 312-61 continued in effect until eventually cancelled on 27 March 1962,² by which time it had been overtaken by the development of still newer contingency plans stemming from subsequent directives of the President or Secretary of Defense.]

C. BIFURCATION OF THE PLANNING

141. On the basis of precedent and an existing cognate plan, CINCLANT planners were able to prepare a draft outline of the required contingency plan in relatively short order. On 19 May following the President's directive, the draft outline plan was submitted to JCS for review. It was designed to meet the [five-day] reaction time stipulated in planning guidance; but in the accompanying letter that transmitted the plan, CINCLANT expressed strong reservations regarding the advisability of trying to achieve such a short reaction time. Referring to the serious problems that this posed, even if it were feasible, and pointing out the consequences of doing so, he recommended that it would be in the interest of military efficiency to allow more lead-time than five days. He proposed, instead, appropriate modification of his current OPLAN 312-61 then in force. It could be altered to provide for an eighteen-day reaction time from "Execute" to "Assault," yet offer a high degree of assurance of bringing Cuba under control in a relatively short time.]

¹JCS 2018/248, 1 March 1961, TOP SECRET.

²Letter, CINCLANT to JCS, Ser. 048/51, "CINCLANT Contingency Operation Plan (Cuba) No. 312-61 (S)," 27 March 1962 TOP SECRET.

³Letter (with Enclosure), CINCLANT to JCS, Ser. 000115/51, "Planning for Quick Reaction Military Action Against Cuba (S)," 19 May 1961; JCS 2304/37, 20 May 1961, TOP SECRET.

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142/C The JCS, in reviewing the draft outline plan, took into consideration CINCLANT's reservations and concluded that more time than five days should be allowed between the order to execute and the initial assault. They agreed that even if the readiness posture required for such a capability could be achieved, it could not be maintained long because of costs involved and dislocating repercussions on general force posture elsewhere. Certain limitations, including a necessity for prepositioning and redeployment, militated against a realistic plan based on five-day lead-time. In the JCS view, availability of assault sea transport was the determining factor, shortage of which might well preclude a five-day reaction capability. Nevertheless, the JCS decided to approve the quick-reaction outline plan for planning purposes only, while trying to obtain authorization to extend the lead-time as CINCLANT had recommended.¹

143. Three days later, on 16 June 1961, the JCS advised the Secretary of Defense that more leeway than the stipulated five-day reaction time "must be provided" citing the reasons referred to above. Acting on CINCLANT's proposal, they recommended to the Secretary that a reaction time of eight or nine days, from decision to assault, be adopted instead. The JCS pointed out that in an emergency, if urgent need so warranted,

JCS 2304/39, 13 June 1961, TOP SECRET.

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144. At the same time the JCS informed CINCLANT that, after reviewing the outline plan he had submitted on 1 May 1961, they agreed with his position that the five-day reaction time needed change. Nevertheless, CINCLANT was instructed to continue to develop the required quick-reaction plan, cutting the lead-time to as short a period as possible. The concept of operations on which it was to be based was an early airborne assault followed by seaborne build-up. This plan would apply in case a sudden emergency situation necessitated such rapid response. Meanwhile, the JCS granted CINCLANT the requested authorization to proceed to develop his proposed alternate plan of [eighteen-day] reaction time as a matter of priority²

145. Thus, by this action the JCS had set in motion two parallel but different contingency military operation plans for Cuba to be developed simultaneously. These JCS instructions constituted the initiating directive and guiding terms of reference for what were later to become CINCLANT OPLAN 316-61 and CINCLANT OPLAN 314-61, providing for quick reaction and for longer lead-time respectively. The bifurcation marked the beginning of a proliferation in the contingency planning for Cuba, resulting eventually in the so-called "family" of contingency military plans.]

Memo, JCS to SecDef, SM-414-61, "Contingency Outline Plan, (Cuba) (S)," 15 June 1961, TOP SECRET

Memo, JCS to CINCLANT, SM-670-61, "Contingency Outline Plan (Cuba) (S)," 16 June 1961, TOP SECRET.

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145. The first contingency plan to be completed was CINCLANT OPLAN 314-61. It was approved by JCS on 30 November 1961, subject to certain conditions, including incorporation of specified changes and receipt of missing Annexes. The operational concept was essentially an elaboration on that contained in the earlier CINCLANT OPLAN 312-61 (Cuba), which had provided for substantially similar operations but with lesser forces. OPLAN 314-61 provided for simultaneous airborne and amphibious assaults against western Cuba, concentrating on the Havana area, and a concurrent amphibious assault on eastern Cuba. The invasion was to be launched from a prepared readiness posture and would take place approximately [eighteen days] after the execution order was received.

147. Considerable attention was given to command arrangements. The provisions specified that the Commander, Joint Task Force 122 (CJTF-122), would be the tactical commander responsible to CINCLANT for the assault phase of the entire operation, exercising overall command of all forces involved. The Commander, Second Fleet (COMSECONDPAC), was designated to function in the role of CJTF-122 when the Joint Task Force was activated. The respective Service component forces making up the Joint Task Force were to be organized into three Service Task Forces under CJTF-122. In addition, the command provisions called for establishment of a "Joint Task Force Cuba" to be commanded by the Army Task Force Commander (who would be CG XVIII Airborne Corps). The latter commander was to exercise operational control over all land

[Memo, JCS to CINCLANT, SM-1274-51, "Contingency Operation Plan No. 314-61 (Cuba) (S)," 30 November 1961, TOP SECRET.]

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forces (Army and Marine) as soon as the airborne and amphibious assault stage had been successfully completed and the forces were firmly lodged ashore; whereupon he would be the tactical commander in charge of continuing ground operations until the invasion mission was accomplished. As Commander Joint Task Force-Cuba, he would be directly responsible to CINCLANT rather than CJTF-122.¹ Significantly, during the actual crisis, these command relationships spelled out in such detail in 314-61 were abandoned.

148. Also contained within OPLAN 314-61 were provisions for development of a separate, alternative "Quick Reaction Plan" utilizing reduced initial forces in the interests of minimizing lead-time. This latter plan was to be, in effect, only a modification of the basic operational concept in 314-61, the main difference being in phasing. [REDACTED] employment of airborne assault forces [REDACTED]

Follow-on forces would then be committed as rapidly as lift capabilities allowed, until eventually the same force strength would be brought to bear as in 314-61. This alternative quick-reaction plan was designated CINCLANT OPLAN 316-61. ²

149. Meanwhile, despite OPLAN 324-61 having been approved by JCS, its predecessor, CINCLANT OPLAN 312-61, remained in force several months longer. Not until 27 March 1962, when the missing Annexes of OPLAN 314-61 were completed and the various subordinate and supporting plans were well enough /

JCS 2018/306, 15 November 1961, (Decision on, dated 30 November 1961), TOP SECRET.

¹²Ibid.

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[along in development, was OPLAN 312-61 canceled.¹ The designation "CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62" (note: "62") was later applied to identify a totally different contingency plan pertaining to another kind of operation.] P1 A1 AS

150. [Planning activity in connection with both OPLAN 314-61 and 316-61 and subordinate and supporting plans continued apace throughout the remainder of 1961 and into 1962, with JCS and the Secretary of Defense being kept apprised of the progress being made. The quick-reaction 316 plan, in the original version as it was being developed at the time,

D. [INTRODUCTION OF AIR-STRIKE CONTINGENCY PLANNING]

151. [Early in January 1962 the Secretary of Defense expressed to the JCS strong dissatisfaction with the reaction time being provided for in the contingency plans for Cuba under development so far. The speed of reaction, he felt, was grossly inadequate. In view of the deficiency of the plans in this regard, the Secretary had decided that what was needed was fast application of U.S. airpower. He therefore directed, first,]

¹Letter CINCLANT to JCS, Ser. O48/51, "CINCLANT Contingency Operation Plan (Cuba) No. 312-61 (S)," 28 March 1962, TOP SECRET.

²CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (U), 29 April 1963, TOP SECRET.

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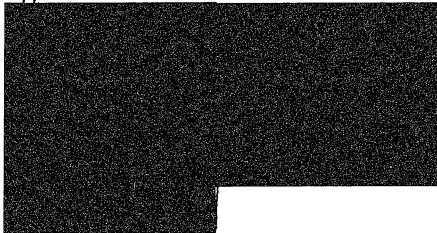
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[That appropriate measures be taken to achieve a rapid-reaction air-strike capability against Cuban military targets, listing in detail the order of priority for specific kinds of targets and the respective reaction times (in terms of hours) for each from a condition of no alert. [Secondly, he also directed that the 18-day reaction time provided for in CINCLANT OPLAN 314-61 be pared down to four days and that the five days provided for in CINCLANT OPLAN 316-61 be cut to two days. It was the former requirement for a rapid-reaction air-strike capability that was the genesis of CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, the air-strike contingency plan.]

152. [The JCS conveyed the views of the Secretary of Defense regarding inadequacy of reaction times to CINCLANT, as well as the Secretary's directive for a rapid-reaction air-strike capability and for a reduction in reaction times of OPLANS 314-61 and 316-61.] Repeating the explicit terms of reference laid down by the Secretary, they instructed CINCLANT to prepare a plan providing for air strikes against specified categories of Cuban military targets in the following order of priority, and in accordance with the respective reaction times (from a condition of no warning) as indicated:



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CINCLANT was further advised that the Secretary of Defense had stipulated that Navy and Air Force tactical aircraft, armed with conventional weapons only, were to be employed.¹

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153. In the same message, the JCS informed CINCLANT of the Secretary of Defense's desire to have the reaction times of the two contingency plans under development reduced drastically. Relaying the Secretary's directive, they instructed CINCLANT to alter OPLAN 314-61 so as to provide for a four-day reaction time and modify OPLAN 316-61 to two days.²

154. To fulfill the new planning requirements, CINCLANT, as a first step, ordered the immediate activation of Joint Task Force 122 on 27 January 1962. At the same time, he provided his subordinate commands, and other commands directly concerned (CINCSTRIKE, CG CONARC, and COMTAC), with the necessary planning guidance in accordance with the terms of reference laid down by the Secretary of Defense and amplified by JCS. He instructed the commanders of the Air Force Task Force and the Naval Task Force of Joint Task Force 122 to be prepared to conduct tactical air strikes against designated targets as directed by CJTF-122. To this end, he requested them to submit estimates of aircraft requirements to achieve the air-strike capability described by the Secretary of Defense, as well as prepositioning requirements therefor, on the basis of TAC aircraft being responsible for the area west of longitude 79° W (running approximately through the middle of Cuba) and naval aircraft for the area east of it. He also requested specific information on the estimated cost of such an air-strike capability and its effect on other major plans and programs.

¹Message JCS to CINCLANT, JCS 3385, 020012Z, January 1962.

²Ibid.]

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[155. As part of the same action, CINCLANT also apprised his subordinate Service component commanders of the second requirement of the Secretary of Defense transmitted by JCS, [namely cutting down the reaction time of CINCLANT OPLAN 314-61 to four days and CINCLANT OPLAN 316-61 to two days.] CINCLANT informed them that in order to achieve such a readiness posture he was prepared to authorize certain alerting and prepositioning of forces, including actual advance deployment of some amphibious and seaborne units. He accordingly instructed them to review their respective supporting plans for 314-61 and 316-61 and submit specific information on the following:

- a. Estimates of alerting and prepositioning requirements to attain a [four-day reaction time for OPLAN 314-61 and two days for OPLAN 316-61.]
- b. Estimates of the length of time such a readiness state could be maintained.
- c. Estimates of costs, and of the impact on other major plans and programs, resulting from such reduction in lead-time.¹]

156. From then on CINCLANT, as well as other commanders affected, was preoccupied with the problem of trying to meet the quick-reaction criteria set by the Secretary of Defense. Planning for the rapid-response, air-strike capability progressed relatively smoothly, culminating in what was eventually to become CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, but the attempt to revise previous plans to provide for such drastically reduced lead-times as the Secretary had imposed proved another matter.]

[Message, CINCLANT to CJTF-122, USARLANT, USAFLANT, CINCLANTFLT (Info: CINCSTRIKE, CG COMARC, COMTAG), 292214Z January 1962, TOP SECRET.]

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[157. CINCLANT held a conference on 7-8 February 1962 with commands concerned to discuss the Secretary of Defense's requirements. On 24 February CINCLANT responded to the JCS directive of 2 January containing the terms of reference. As a result of the conference, an outline for the required air-strike plan had been produced, which was submitted as part of CINCLANT's response. [But with regard to reducing lead-times in the contingency plans, he expressed concern over the risks involved in any invasion plan calling for such a short reaction time from a nonreadiness posture, with no prior notice or preparations. Therefore, he included a list of requirements in detail, including overflights for vertical aerial photography and execution of selected portions of Phases I, II, and III of OPLAN 314-61 (alerting, prepositioning, redeployment, and other preparatory actions). In addition, the forces earmarked for the air-strike plan and the invasion plan -- and their requirements -- were listed by Service.] However, CINCLANT informed JCS of other significant results of the conference. Emerging from the deliberations was the question of whether OPLAN 316-61 was any longer adequate to cope with the current estimated strength of the Cuban armed forces and their apparent continual growth. In the light of this appraisal, and in view of the new requirements for rapid-reaction air-strike capability and for OPLAN 314-61 to have a [four-day] reaction time, the conference concluded that further development of OPLAN 316-61 might not be necessary. ¹]

158. [In another message to JCS on the same day, CINCLANT was more explicit, stating that he "strongly recommends that]

Message, CINCLANT to JCS, 241554Z, Feb. 1962, TOP SECRET.]

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[316-61 be canceled." He gave as reasons that the forces earmarked for initial employment in 316 were considered to be of marginal strength in relation to Cuban armed forces capability, whereas readying and prepositioning measures for 314-61 would not only achieve the reaction time desired but would also provide adequate forces.] |

159. In the JCS reply a month later, on 27 March 1962, CINCLANT was instructed to continue developing OPLAN 316-61 in accordance with the latest terms of reference of the Secretary of Defense (two-day reaction time), but simultaneously to develop modifications of it based on advance preparedness and on increased reaction time.² In effect, this set in motion a new cycle of planning, amounting to two new sets of quick-reaction plans over and above the basic 316 plan. Consequently, there was no final version settled upon, and OPLAN 316-61, as such, never did receive formal JCS approval, other than de facto acceptance for planning purposes only.

160. As a consequence of the JCS instruction of 27 March, a two-day reaction version of OPLAN 316 was eventually produced by CINCLANT to comply with the earlier directive of the Secretary of Defense. Rather than being developed as a separate formal plan, it was included as a somewhat incidental supplement to the 316 plan proper, being provided for in Annex "G". It was based on the assumption that there would be considerable prior warning and, indeed, that some of the forces involved would have even been prepositioned beforehand.³

¹Message, CINCLANT to JCS, 241604Z, Feb. 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message, JCS to CINCLANT, JCS 3806, 272100Z, March 1962, TOP SECRET.

³CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (U), 29 April 1963, TOP SECRET.

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[Intensive development of the planning details was apparently not pressed by either CINCLANT or JCS, for it barely evolved beyond the outline stage before being abandoned when the [two-day] reaction requirement was overtaken by new terms of reference. At no time did the [two-day] reaction plan contained in Annex "G" reach, in form or status, anything approaching a complete, approved operation plan.]

161. [In August, the generally increasing Cuban military capabilities, which had been observed earlier, now became more apparent and an appreciation of their tactical significance to any contemplated U.S. military action more conclusive. Signs pointing to a considerable improvement in Cuba's hitherto rudimentary air-defense capability were particularly disturbing. By early September recognition of the extent of the improvement, in quality and quantity, injected fresh impetus into planning, lending especially a new point and urgency to the requirement for air-strike plans. Responsibility for preparing the actual substance of the air-strike plan that had been directed by the Secretary of Defense the preceding January fell largely upon COMTAC/CINCPACFLT, as the commander most directly involved in such operations. On 7 September COMTAC formed a special staff planning group expressly charged with developing a detailed air-strike operation plan based on CINCLANT's concept and outline that had originated the previous March. Before the month was out, a proposed operation plan, nicknamed "ROCK PILE," was produced. CINCPACFLT's concurrence had been obtained on 11 September; and on 27 September the Chief of Staff USAF reviewed and approved it, directing COMTAC to submit it to CINCLANT as a fully coordinated USAF plan. The following day CINCLANT, upon being briefed on the plan by COMTAC/CINCPACFLT, accepted it as the basis for the]

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CINCLANT air-strike operation plan, and on 1 October ROCK PILE was officially designated as CINCLANT OFLAN 312-62 (Cuba).¹ The plan was still far from completion and work continued on it both at CINCLANT and COMTAC.]

162. Throughout the spring and summer of 1962, the scope of planning activity in connection with the various contingency operation plans under development became all-pervasive. Pre-occupied in it were not only CINCLANT, who had overall responsibility, but also the three Service component commanders under LANTCOM (USARLANT, USAFLANT, CINCLANTFLT), plus CJTF-122 and the three Service Task Forces under CJTF-122, the JCS, the Services, the Service commands directly affected (CONARC, COMTAC, CINCSTRIKE), the subordinate tactical units that were to carry out the operation, and finally, the combat support and logistic organizations. The complexity of all the planning coordination that this involved was further complicated by a changing "enemy situation."

E. GUANTANAMO REINFORCEMENT PLANNING

163. One of the specific immediate problems posed by the improving Cuban capability was defense of the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo. There was mounting concern over the potentially inviting vulnerability of the Base in relation to growing Cuban ground strength. On 17 September, the JCS instructed CINCLANT to prepare, in coordination with CINCSTRIKE, special plans beyond existing plans for prompt reinforcement of

¹USAF Historical Division Liaison Office, "Chronology of Air Force Actions During the Cuban Crisis, 14 October - 30 November 1962," TOP SECRET.

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Guantanamo in anticipation of an expected attack and in the event of actual attack triggering implementation of OPLAN 314/316. ¹

164. CINCLANT responded on 26 September 1962 with a request for the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (one regimental landing team, one air group, and associated amphibious assault lift), then assigned to CINCPAC and stationed on the West Coast, to be made available to LANTCOM for the required Guantanamo reinforcement. As an alternative, if this were not possible, he proposed using STRICOM forces (two airlifted airborne battle groups) that were scheduled for another mission in OPLAN 314/316. CINCLANT cautioned, however, that the use of STRICOM or LANTCOM forces for such augmentation of Guantanamo defenses would be at the expense of subsequent Cuban contingency operations as then planned. ² On 8 October, when JCS forwarded to CINCLANT a Secretary of Defense request for readiness requirements to meet Cuban contingencies, ³ CINCLANT in his reply the same day reiterated his requirement for the 5th MEB from PACOM. In addition, he requested withdrawal of the PHIBRON and Battalion Landing Team then deployed in the Mediterranean. ⁴

165 JCS queried CINCPAC, CINCEUR, and CINCNELM for their views on CINCLANT's request. ⁵ CINCPAC reluctantly agreed to

¹Message, JCS to CINCLANT, (Info CYNOSTRIKE), JCS 6146, 17 September 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message, CINCLANT to JCS, 261922Z, September 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message, JCS to CINCLANT, JCS 6590, 8 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message, CINCLANT to JCS, 081916Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁵Message, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 6625, 10 October 1962;
Message, JCS to CINCEUR and CINCNELM, JCS 6620, 10 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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make the 5th MEB available to CINCLANT, despite the fact that this would seriously degrade certain of PACFLT's capabilities, but recommended against any redeployment of these forces until actually needed.¹ CINCEUR and CINCNELM, however, both recommended against withdrawal of the requested forces then deployed in the Mediterranean, since their presence was crucial to executing CINCEUR and CINCNELM contingency plans.²

166. The JCS took the issue under formal consideration, generating a "JCS Green" on it on 12 October. The JCS decided that the 5th MEB should be deployed temporarily from the West Coast to the Caribbean area but that the PHIBRON and BLT in the Mediterranean should not be withdrawn.³ They were in the process of so recommending to the Secretary of Defense when the whole matter was overtaken by the event of the Cuban crisis, itself, and the original planning proposal calling for reinforcement of Guantanamo defenses became a requirement of immediate operational urgency. The problem encountered in fulfilling the requirement will be discussed in detail elsewhere.

167. Through September, reflecting a growing awareness of the extent of the Soviet-sponsored build-up in Cuba, there were other reactions affecting contingency planning. One of the most serious aspects of the build-up was the relatively sophisticated nature of some of the weaponry being furnished Cuba, particularly G-band radar and air and coastal missile-defense systems. The Chairman, JCS, informed CINCLANT of U.S. concern over the gravity of these developments

¹Message, CINCPAC to JCS, 110920Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message, CINCNELM to JCS, 101721Z, October 1962; Message, CINCEUR to JCS, 111610Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³JCS 2304/68 (with Enclosure), 12 October 1962 (revised 15 October 1962), TOP SECRET.

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and advised him to take measures to insure that his contingency plans and capabilities keep pace with the changing enemy situation. On 19 September, CINCLANT apprised the Chairman of the actions he had directed to be taken in the light of increased Cuban defensive capabilities. CJTF-122, CG XVIII Airborne Corps, Commander Amphibious Forces Atlantic (COMPHIBLANT), CG Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic (CGFMFLANT), and Commander 19th Air Force were instructed to review for adequacy the "complete family" of plans for Cuba. They were also requested to consider the possibility of requirements to conduct other operations corollary to those provided for in existing plans, such as deception and electronic or unconventional warfare, which might contribute to accomplishing their respective combat missions. CINCLANT reported, too, that targeting of Cuba was continuing to receive the highest priority and was being kept current of latest intelligence. He had, furthermore, called a conference, to be held on 2 October, of the senior commanders who would be involved in planned contingency operations, in order to discuss fully the tactical implications of the new Cuban developments.¹

168. Concern over these tactical implications of the Soviet military build-up in Cuba also reached the White House. The President was especially apprehensive about U.S. losses expected in attacking SA-2 missile sites. On 21 September, he requested the Secretary of Defense to make sure that contingency plans for Cuba were kept up-to-date so as to take into account "additions to their armaments resulting from the continuous influx of Soviet equipment and technicians."² Action

¹Message, CINCLANT to JCS (Exclusive for Chairman), 192318Z, September 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Memo, President to SecDef (no subject), 21 September 1962, TOP SECRET.

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on the matter was referred by the Secretary of Defense to the JCS, and on 1 October 1962, the Chairman, JCS, submitted a draft response to the Secretary based in large part on CINC-LANT's earlier comments, the substance of which was forwarded to the President on 4 October. In it the President was reassured that the "complete family" of contingency plans for Cuba "is constantly being reviewed, revised and updated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic and appropriate subordinate commanders to counter the changing capabilities of the Cuban forces."¹

P. BLOCKADE PLANNING

169. Meanwhile, the Joint Strategic Survey Council (JSSC) had undertaken, at JCS request, a study of the strategic implications of the Soviet build-up of Cuban military capability. The resulting JSSC report, dated 19 September, concluded that the situation had reached a point where the use of armed force was now needed, prior to Cuban attainment of an offensive capability to threaten U.S. vital interests and before Soviet vital interests became involved. The Council was particularly apprehensive about the possibility of a Soviet MRBM or submarine atomic capability being established in Cuba. In the present circumstances and prospects, it saw only two courses of action for the U.S.: invasion or blockade. Although the tenor of their position was in favor of invasion, they pointed out that a blockade, if continued long enough, would starve out Cuba and forestall further Soviet delivery of arms of all types.²

¹ Attachment to Memo, CJCS to SecDef, CM-990-62, "Presidential Interest in SA-2 Missile Systems and Contingency Planning for Cuba (C)," 1 October 1962; Memo, SecDef to President, same subject, 4 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

² JCS-2304/58, 19 September 1962, TOP SECRET.

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170. The JSSC report was not adopted as a formal JCS position paper, but its conclusions with respect to a blockade were apparently conveyed to CINCLANT and precipitated a fresh round of planning activity. CINCLANT OPLAN 314-61 and 316-61, as well as plans in support of them, had contained passing references to a possible blockade of Cuba incidental to the main operations provided for. These references, however, hardly constituted a detailed plan for a blockade operation as such. Therefore, on 21 September, CINCLANT issued Planning Directive 118-62 calling for contingency planning preparations for a blockade of Cuba.¹

171. The Planning Directive's assumptions stated, "A blockade of Cuba could bring Cuban economy to a standstill in relatively short time," and would be "particularly disastrous with respect to POL." Its statement of the mission was "...when directed, conduct a naval and air blockade of Cuba in order to bring about a collapse of the Communist economy of Cuba." CINCSTRIKE would provide the forces, but CJTF-122 would exercise operational control of them.² Within a month CJTF-122 developed Annex "Q" to his CJTF-122 OPLAN 314-61 and 316-61, which provided for establishment of a sea and air blockade of Cuba as directed.³

172. The resulting blockade plans, however, proved inapplicable during the crisis. They were predicated upon complete blockades, both sea and air; the "quarantine" that was the actual course of action decided on was limited, selective, and restricted to surface ships only. An appropriate new plan had to be improvised later on the spur of the moment.⁴

¹Message, CINCLANT to CINCLANTFLT, CJTF-122, at al. 212136Z, September 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Ibid.

³Appendix "A" to Enclosure to JCS 2304/69, 14 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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REAPPRAISALS OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING

173. By the end of September, the state of contingency operations plans under development was beginning to become both confusing and unmanageable. Their number and variety had grown somewhat unsystematically, with no assurance of comprehensiveness. Moreover, circumstances and objectives had changed from the relatively simple, clear-cut purposes that had initially motivated the contingency planning. On 1 October, at a meeting of the Secretary of Defense with the JCS, the question was raised as to the kinds of contingencies under which military operations against Cuba might be necessary. Some explicit political terms of reference regarding goals and objectives, the JCS felt, were desirable as a guide to what military planning should address itself.

174. The following day, October 2, the Secretary of Defense responded with a memorandum to the Chairman, JCS. He stated that U.S. national objectives in any contingency involving military action against Cuba would be either:

a. "The removal of the threat to U.S. security of Soviet weapon systems in Cuba," or

b. "Removal of the Castro regime and supplanting it with a new Cuban regime acceptable to the U.S."

175. Preceding that the second objective was the more difficult, he pointed out that it might nevertheless be necessary if the first were to be secured permanently. The Secretary then described the gamut of likely circumstances under which military action might be required and toward which military

JCS 2304/64, 3 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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planning should be oriented, identifying the following list of six categories of contingencies:

a. Soviet action against Western rights in Berlin where Western countermeasures would include a blockade of Cuba.

b. Evidence of Communist Bloc positioning of offensive weapon systems in Cuba.

c. Attack against the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo, or against U.S. planes or shipping outside Cuban territorial waters or airspace.

d. A "substantial popular uprising" in Cuba against the Castro regime in which U.S. aid is requested by insurgent leaders.

e. Cuban armed assistance to subversion in other parts of the Western Hemisphere.

f. A Presidential decision that the Cuban situation has "reached a point inconsistent with continuing U.S. national security."

He requested JCS views on the appropriateness and completeness of this list.

175. In the same memorandum the Secretary of Defense also asked the JCS to provide answers to the following:

a. The military operational plans considered suitable for each contingency listed above.

b. The preparatory actions that should be taken now and progressively in the future to improve U.S. readiness to execute these plans.

c. The impact of U.S. actions taken in Cuba on U.S. force and logistic capabilities for meeting contingencies in other areas of the world, i.e., Berlin, Southeast Asia, etc.

Memo, SecDef to CJCS, no subject, 2 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

Ibid.

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177. To help develop answers to the question regarding improving readiness posture, the JCS called a conference of operations and logistic planners of CINCLANT, CINCSRIKE, and the Service Chiefs, who met in the Pentagon on 10 October. In the course of the discussions, the conference considered, besides readiness posture itself, most of the other points raised by the Secretary of Defense.¹ The views expressed and the consensus reached were taken into account in the staffing of the JCS response to the Secretary.

H. PLANNED U.S. MILITARY CONTINGENCY POSTURE ON THE EVE OF THE CRISIS

178. In the process of preparing a response to the 2 October memorandum of the Secretary of Defense, the JCS produced a consolidated compendium summarizing the general planned U.S. military posture for dealing with a Cuban contingency as that posture was on the eve of the crisis. The basic JCS paper, staffed by J-3, was dated 14 October and received tentative JCS approval on 15 October. There was no final approval in the form of a "red band" decision-on, nor was the draft memorandum contained in its enclosure forwarded, inasmuch as by this time the entire matter was being overtaken by events.² Its substance, however, was conveyed informally to the Secretary of Defense in various conferences, briefings, and consultations immediately attending the first reactions to the crisis.

179. First of all, on the recommendation of CINCLANT, a seventh contingency was added to the six listed by the Secretary of Defense, namely, "Raids on the United States."

¹"CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)," 28 April 1963, TOP SECRET.

²JCS 2304/69, 14 October 1962 (N/H, 15 October 1962), TOP SECRET.

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Then each of the three basic contingency plans was described, along with their individual functional characteristics and limitations, and the interrelationship between them explained.

180. OPLAN 312-62, the air-strike plan, could be conducted alone or serve as an opening step to be followed by execution of OPLAN 314-61 or 316-61, but in the JCS view, if a contingency were serious enough to require implementation of the 312 plan, it would also require initiation of the 314/316 invasion plans. The planned force commitment provided for in OPLAN 312-62 was:



105 2304/69, 14 October 1962 (N/H, 15 October 1962), TOP SECRET

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181. This would make available for operational employment a total of approximately [470] naval and Air Force aircraft within [24 hours] of an order to execute the plan. OPLAN 312-62, the JCS felt, could be conducted with minimal losses, based on the estimated enemy capability for the next 6 months. It would accomplish the first national objective stated by the Secretary of Defense: to remove a military threat to U.S. security posed by Soviet offensive weapon systems in Cuba. /

182. Separately allocated under the provisions of Guantanamo reinforcement plans was [one] Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) from the Caribbean amphibious squadron (CARIB PHIBRON) and [one] Marine Battalion to be airlifted from CONUS. /

183. OPLAN 314-61 and 316-61 were next outlined, with the reaction time of the former indicated as being 18 days and that of the latter as 5 days. There was no mention of the 4-day and 2-day reaction times that the Secretary had demanded earlier. Either of these plans would also accomplish, besides the first national objective above, the second one of removing the Castro regime and supplanting it with a new Cuban government acceptable to the U.S. The magnitude and phasing of the force commitment provided for in 314-61 was considered adequate to lend high assurance of success against the present Cuban capability, but 316-61, although providing ultimately for the same magnitude of force commitment, involved risks concomitant with the slower incremental phasing and build-up of forces in Cuba. /

124. The planned force commitment provided for in 314/316-61 constituted the "overwhelming force" required by the President's original terms of reference laid down in April 1961. In addition to including all of OPLAN 312-62 and Guantanamo augmentation forces listed above, it was to be composed of the following: /

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135. Some preparatory measures, it was pointed out, had been taken by the Services to improve readiness posture. Among these were prepositioning of POL, ammunition, and other expendables by the Navy and Air Force at bases in southeastern U.S., preloading of supplies in amphibious shipping by the Navy and Marine Corps, and positioning of accompanying supplies and equipment for Army assault forces at or near home stations by the Army. Constraints upon further reduction of reaction time, the JCS pointed out, were primarily those imposed by budgeting considerations. Significant reductions in reaction time could be effected by taking certain other preparatory measures to improve readiness, if a raise in budget ceilings permitted. These were. prepositioning of units with their equipment and supplies, construction of staging facilities, requisitioning a large number of merchant ships, and mobilization of Air Force Reserve Units.]

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185. Finally, in response to the Secretary's request for JCS views on the effects elsewhere of U.S. military action against Cuba, the JCS paper had concluded that the following military consequences could be expected:

a. If the U.S. imposed a blockade on Cuba, it would have little direct military effect on U.S. posture in Berlin or Southeast Asia, but would have major international political ramifications, "as it constitutes an act of war," and would thus result in increased DEFCON status of U.S. forces worldwide.

b. If OPLAN 312-62 were executed, it too would not affect U.S. military posture in Berlin or Southeast Asia (other than increasing DEFCON status), but there would be serious political repercussions, Soviet reaction to which could not be foreseen.

c. If OPLAN 314-61 or 316-61 were executed, the JCS assessment of the military effect was:

(1) Adequate airlift to Europe and Southeast Asia would not be available for an estimated 8 days, beginning with D-5.

(2) Airlift within EUROCOM, PACOM, and CARIBCOM would be "severely restricted" if C-130 aircraft were withdrawn to CONUS, as presently envisaged, instead of calling up Air Force Reserve C-119 aircraft.

(3) Thirty percent of cargo shipping and seventy percent of passenger ship as in the Atlantic presently under U.S. control would be required for a period of 30 days.

(4) Force augmentation plans for EUROCOM and PACOM could not be fully carried out until termination of major combat operations in Cuba.]

Appendix 'A' to Enclosure to JCS 2304/62, 14 October 1962

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Notably, the JCS paper was dated 14 October 1962. In it there was no indication that U.S. military action addressed to Cuba might be expected to raise central strategic issues with the USSR as one of the principals.

187. Of the three basic contingency plans described above, only OPLAN 314-61 had been approved; the other two, 316-61 and 312-62, were still incomplete, either undergoing revision or being developed in several tentative versions. There was also the CJTF-122 contingency plan for sea and air blockade of Cuba. Besides these contingency plans, other existing plans that later proved to have intimate operational relevance to the crisis were the standing general war plans, such as those of CONAD for the defense of the U.S. mainland and the SIOP.]

188. This then represented a summation of the planned U.S. military posture to meet a Cuban contingency as of 15 October 1962, before events had yet revealed the nature of the contingency or national decision makers determined what response was in order. Preparation of the posture had been under way over a period of a year and a half and was still evolving. Embodied in the complex of plans that gave the posture its form were, inevitably, certain assumptions, commitments, and expectations, central to which was the anticipation of a military crisis calling for a forthright military solution. /

189. The coming crisis indeed proved to be essentially a military one -- vital national security interests were threatened. However, the means directly employed to articulate the military issues, to achieve the military objectives and ultimately to resolve the military crisis were manifestly political-diplomatic measures. The]

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[role of military action itself was always imminent but remained latent, and the task of maintaining the required delicate balance between the two devolved largely upon contingency planning.]

I. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

190. The precrisis contingency planning had begun, some 18 months before the crisis, with a crisply defined, single focus. It had been expressly initiated as a reaction to a specific event -- the ignominious Bay of Pigs fiasco. The original purpose was to devise a straightforward military operation plan to accomplish the explicit military objective of invading and subduing Cuba by U.S. forces. Gradually, as technical military considerations and policy desiderata injected qualifying ramifications, the planning became more complicated. The trend toward complexity increased with time and the original sharp focus progressively gave way to a multiple-perspective approach. New planning requirements tended to be cumulative.

191. [A major bifurcation in the planning had occurred a year before the crisis. It was the result of dissatisfaction at the national decision-making level with the speed of reaction being provided for to implement the invasion plan. As a consequence, eventually four categories of invasion planning, each oriented to its respective reaction time, were simultaneously underway. Two crystallized into separate, distinct invasion operation plans: OPLAN 314-61, based on 14-day lead time; and OPLAN 316-62, a quick-reaction version based on 5-day lead time. The other two categories, however, were not formally abandoned, but all four were actively being pursued with greater or lesser emphasis in parallel when the crisis came.]

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152. ¹ The second, and more important, bifurcation in the contingency planning occurred six months before the crisis as a result of the introduction of a new planning requirement for a different kind of contingency operation. It too reflected dissatisfaction on the national decision-making level with the best reaction times that military invasion planning had been able to achieve. In order to bring military force to bear more rapidly than in the form of invasion, planning was undertaken for large-scale air-strike operations against Cuba. The air-strike contingency plan, designated OPLAN 312-61, was independent of the 314/316 plans and could be executed either alone or be followed by implementation of the invasion plans.]

193. In addition to the several versions of contingency plans proper, a congeries of ancillary, subsidiary, and supporting plans, keyed to each operational course of action contemplated, was also undertaken to carry the planning to the necessary depth of detail.

194. Dominating precrisis contingency preparations, and largely determining the character of the military plans produced, were the national assumptions regarding the nature and context of the expected contingency.

195. The entire complex of contingency plans had been predicated upon a simplified model of a classic contingency situation. It presumed a localized off-shore incident in which "police-action" measures would be brought to bear against a malefactor, in order to eliminate the source of provocation and restore order to the Caribbean community. Specifically, in this case, the only protagonists actively engaged would be the U.S. and Cuba, with the affected military arena containing itself to Cuban territory, and the]

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attendant military action confined to conventional operations in a limited-war context. It further presupposed the tactical initiative to be a U.S. prerogative. Since the motivation was to be essentially preemptive, the exact timing, scale, and type of military action taken would be optional at the discretion of the U.S. B1
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196. Not until the very eve of the crisis was the possibility raised, in explicit terms, that the nature and circumstances of a Cuban contingency could be quite different from what had been assumed. Less than two weeks before the crisis, the Secretary of Defense had apprised the JCS that vital U.S. interests might indeed be involved, when he advised that one of the national objectives might be "the removal of the threat to U.S. security of Soviet weapon systems in Cuba." This did not, however, bring about a fundamental reappraisal of planning requirements. The preparation of the JCS response, staffing of which was completed on the day of the reconnaissance photographs that precipitated the crisis, gave no particular emphasis to the strategic implications of such a national objective. Certainly the existing contingency plans themselves were not materially affected. Local operations addressed to Cuba were still viewed as comprehending the main military aspects of a Cuban contingency, with the Soviet factor peripheral or incidental. T

197. A salient characteristic of all this planning activity was the generative source of impetus that set in motion most of the significant planning developments. The prime-mover force that initiated planning actions or subsequently re-directed their course was outside the military establishment. Every basic plan and alternate version of it came into being directly in response to a specific requirement expressly laid on by the President or the Secretary of Defense. J

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198. A concomitant characteristic was that almost no substantive planning was done within the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Typically, the bulk of the actual planning was performed at the LANTCOM level or below. The JCS relayed requirements and instructions received from the Secretary of Defense to CINCLANT, who in turn usually referred them to his appropriate Service component commander concerned. Since the Army and Air Force component commands of LANTCOM had not been activated and staffed as such, responsibility for conducting the planning devolved upon them in their other command capacities, namely as COMUSCONARC and COMINTAC respectively. As Service commands, they coordinated their planning with their Service chiefs as much as with CINCLANT. In practice, thus, the JCS, and to some extent CINCLANT as well, had a largely passive, intermediary role as agents between the planning principals who originated and responded to planning requirements. The participation of the JCS was essentially post facto and confined to either delegation of planning tasks or authorization of the way the planning tasks were fulfilled.

199. Up to the time of the crisis, the status of individual elements comprising the complex of contingency plans was not uniform. The basic plans, alternate versions of them, and their organic components were in various stages of development. Some had been completed and formally adopted; others were pending, awaiting review and approval; and still others were only outlines of plans, or even were proposed concepts that had yet to be accepted. Most were in the formative stage of being drafted. A few had hardly gotten beyond the articulation of a planning requirement, then were not heard of again. Among these different planning elements, there sometimes was inconsistency, and occasionally contradiction. In the complex as a whole, there was no little ambiguity.

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200. [A corollary of the above characteristics, as demonstrated in the precrisis experience, was that the structure and functioning of military contingency planning was unsystematic. Its processes, rather than consistently following regular patterns of dependent interactions, were variable and unpredictable, with the key determinants impinging at random from outside. In short, there was no contingency planning system.]

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III. THE U.S. BASIC DECISION

201. The formulation of U.S. policy in response to the Soviet stratagem in Cuba was a unique process, marked both by informality and effectiveness. It was completely within the White House purview, with the President taking part in every step of the process from which the policy finally emerged. This Executive decision-making process was almost textbook in its quality, and accordingly, the events of the critical week have received a phenomenal degree of public attention. While no actual White House records have been made available, either to the public or to this study, enough information has become public for an accurate picture to be drawn.

A. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

202. The U.S. had been generally aware of a Soviet-sponsored military buildup occurring in Cuba for some time before the crisis. During the summer and fall of 1962, Cuban contingency planning and intelligence operations covering the military buildup proceeded on parallel but essentially distinct paths. Without doubt, the results of the latter influenced the former, the growth of Cuban capability, for example, obviously bore a direct relationship to contemplated U.S. force requirements in the plans. The plans were based upon a U.S.-Cuban clash but the intelligence operations showed a continuing and increasing Soviet involvement. This fact charged the perspective of U.S. military action against Cuba, since it brought into the picture new and incalculable factors of significance going far beyond the Caribbean.

203. However, there had been a marked disinclination to believe the Soviets would be so rash as to base offensive nuclear weapons in Cuba. Indeed, regular classified intelligence sources that are normally circulated did not report any

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[Indications to this effect, or even seriously entertained the possibility in their interpretation of Cuban military developments.¹ On the contrary, the Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) of 19 September 1962, which expressly addressed itself to the military buildup in Cuba, was actually misleading. The burden of the conclusions contained in the Estimate were that the USSR's interest in Cuba was "primarily for the political advantages," that the military buildup was for purposes of Cuban defense, and that the Soviets were unlikely to introduce strategic offensive weapons systems into Cuba -- especially discounted was the probability of Soviet deployment of nuclear-armed missiles.² Undoubtedly as the crisis approached there were other, tenuous indications received which, because of their sensitivity, were extremely closely held and not reported in the circulated intelligence publications; but apparently these did not materially alter U.S. expectations, certainly not enough to trigger a fundamental reappraisal in time.]

204. U.S. policy posture thus was pointedly oriented away from a contingency such as would be posed by introduction of Soviet strategic missiles into Cuba. Consequently, when the event was suddenly recognized as having already occurred, it came as a surprise and a response had to be contrived on an ad hoc basis. A choice had to be made between the direct pursuit of the courses of action embodied in the contingency plans and some other less final course which took into account the Soviet presence in Cuba. Nevertheless, during the period of decision, from October 15 to October 22, steps were simultaneously put into effect to prepare to carry out the contingency.]

¹Based on a systematic analysis of the pertinent NIEs and SNIEs issued in the six months prior to the crisis, all the CIA Current Intelligence Weekly Summaries for the period September-October 1962, and all DIA Intelligence Bulletins for the month preceding the President's speech (all SECRET).

²SNIE 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," 19 Sep 62, SECRET.

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plans in the event the ad hoc plan failed to accomplish its purpose. Although intelligence information on the Soviet buildup had begun to increase markedly in early summer, it was not until October 1 that routine peripheral photo reconnaissance missions around Cuca were begun. In addition, high-altitude U-2 flights over Cuba were also flown, and it was by this covert means that the offensive threat was discovered.

B. THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

205. The U-2 photographs taken on October 14 were not available until late on the 15th, although CIA officials and others in the intelligence community had apparently been alerted to the tentative nature of the findings by about noon of that day. This information was relayed to the JCS and White House staff and to a small group of top officials of DOD and the State Department, but the President himself was not informed until 0900² on the 16th³.

206. Ordering increased surveillance of the whole island, the President organized a group of key advisors who would finally be the ones to throw out a U.S. response. The body of advisors was eventually narrowed to a group of eight who later were constituted into an Executive Committee of the NSC

¹ "CINCLAN" Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, 1962, TOP SECRET.

² Geographical discrepancies in time have been reconciled on the basis of greatest significance from the Joint Staff-JMCC point of view. All times given in the text, except where indicated otherwise, have been converted to a common equivalent corresponding to the prevailing local time in Washington, whereas time references in footnote citations retain the original Greenwich Mean Time constant designated in terms of Z time. Because of "daylight saving time" being in effect during part of the crisis period, two time differentials between local Washington time and Z time must be taken into account: Eastern Daylight Saving Time, i.e., Q-time, which terminated at 0600Z, 28 October 1962, is Z-time minus four hours; Eastern Standard Time, i.e., R-time, to which local Washington time reverted as of 0600Z that date, is Z-time minus five hours.

³ Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, October 15-28, 1962. Official publication (no date or source) based on information provided by the White House Press Office, DoD Office of Public Affairs, and the State Department Bureau of Public Affairs.

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but these constantly drew on the counsel and support of a wider group. The sole military member of this committee was the Chairman of the JCS. In total numbers, those who were informed of the critical situation were very few.¹

207. The key element in the situation appeared to be the urgent nature of the clandestine Soviet move. The decision to station Soviet strategic forces outside the Soviet Union for the first time was a deliberately provocative gesture, an attempt to overturn swiftly and by surprise the existing nuclear status quo. It was felt that the Soviet move was undoubtedly tied to larger objectives than Cuba per se. It was all too clear that a sudden dramatic Soviet revelation of an operational capability in Cuba, coupled with a renewed effort to change the Berlin situation, would put the U.S. at a grave disadvantage. Arrant defiance of America with impunity would seriously undermine confidence in the U.S. among friends and Allies, while the missiles themselves would go far toward redressing the strategic equation in favor of the Soviets.

208. The extremely sinister nature of the Soviet move was highlighted by the deliberate deception practiced by the USSR. On September 11, the Soviets publicly stated that the armaments sent to Cuba were defensive only and that there was no need for the USSR to base its offensive forces overseas.² Again, during the critical week of decision making itself, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko personally assured the President, during their meeting on October 19, that Soviet assistance to Cuba "pursued solely the purpose

¹Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, op. cit., page 2.

²New York Times, September 12, 1962.

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of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba."¹ He said he had been explicitly instructed to make this clear once again, that the training by Soviet specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive weapons was "by no means offensive" and that "the Soviet Government would never become involved in rendering such assistance."²

209. Some confusion over objectives became evident at the first meeting of the Executive Committee. Some members thought the prime aim should be to get rid of the offensive weapons; others considered it necessary to remove the Castro regime.

210. The courses of action open to the President ran the gamut from passive acceptance of the Soviet coup to invasion of Cuba without warning. Intermediate steps possible included, in ascending order of forcefulness, a major effort of protest through the U.N., a blockade coupled with a demand for the removal of the offensive weapons, and a surprise air strike against these weapons. Combinations were possible, such as an ultimatum to be followed by invasion, or an air strike to destroy the offensive weapons accompanied by a blockade to prevent the introduction of further weapons.

211. Passive acceptance of the Soviet move or an equally useless protest were promptly discarded as courses of action, and discussion during the week concentrated on positive actions of greater or lesser violence.

¹The Soviets were indulging in semantic chicanery in their use of the terms "defensive" and "offensive." For purposes of propaganda, they could claim the offensive weapons were there only as part of the defense of Cuba.

²New York Times, October 23, 1962.

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212. Surprise invasion was soon ruled out for two reasons. In the first place, the effect might be so startling as to provoke the Soviets into an almost automatic reflex countermove in which lay the grave possibility of escalation to general war. Secondly, there was the problem of timing. It was apparent that a decision would have to be reached and a course of action implemented within a few days, since the Soviet missiles would very soon be fully operational. If this occurred before the U.S. action had been launched, our move would become a countermove, all the advantages of catching the Soviets by surprise would be lost, and the Soviets would be compelled to more strongly defend their position in Cuba, especially if its presence had previously been announced to the world. In view of the length of time necessary to prepare an invasion and the scale of the operations involved, surprise would almost certainly be lost. Furthermore, the moral factor counted heavily against both forms of surprise attack.

213. By Thursday, October 18, discussions in the Executive Committee began to center on the use of a naval blockade. The disadvantages of this alternative were perhaps more glaring than its advantages. It would not per se dismantle the missile bases and remove the weapons; unfavorable repercussions among maritime nations, especially within NATO, might be severe; it might be necessary to sink Soviet ships if the Soviets chose to challenge the blockade, the natural Soviet riposte appeared to be a counterblockade of Berlin, with all the potentialities in this; finally, a blockade might not take immediate effect, and by prolonging the crisis, could permit the Soviets more time to counteract. Furthermore, the longer the crisis lasted, the more likely would it become that a clash with Soviet ships or personnel would occur.

214. The most attractive feature of the blockade, on the other hand, lay in the fact that it was not irrevocable.

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Coupled with a stern warning, and accompanied by obvious preparations for direct military action against the island, blockade would still leave the Soviets the possibility of withdrawal without leaving a record of American, Cuban, and Russian dead. The restrained nature of the U.S. response, once the full extent of the Soviet duplicity was revealed to the world, would be more likely to gain the political support we wished to use as pressure against the Soviets. The door was left open for peaceful solution.

215. To be sure, if the blockade were to fail in its purpose, the Soviets would have time to develop a countermove somewhere, as well as to get their missiles operational. However, the U.S. would also have time to marshal its forces for invasion. We would then be in a position to raise progressively the degree of pressure at will, without having initially thrown our whole hand down on the table.

216. The choice thus was between the competing demands of measured restraint and time.

C. THE COURSE OF ACTION ADOPTED

217. By Saturday, October 20, a consensus of the Executive Committee had been reached; and that afternoon, after a detailed intelligence briefing which illustrated the rapidly advancing state of work at each missile site, the President tentatively decided that the U.S. course of action would be a blockade. Ultimately called a quarantine, it would be coupled with a warning to the Soviet Union and a demand for removal of the offensive weapons. The U.S. case would simultaneously be taken to the U.N. Security Council. The President would announce the U.S. policy in an address to the American people during the evening of the 22nd. The quarantine would be instituted as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to notify Allies and to permit necessary military preparations.¹

¹New York Times, November 6, 1962.

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218. In the event of a security breach, the possibility remained of acting sooner.

219. In the meantime preparations for the execution of contingency plans for Cuba would continue. Forces would be gathered, prepositioned and readied, but no "executs" date would be set for assault.

220. Arrangements, to be described in detail elsewhere in this study, were made to inform and coordinate with allied states, especially in NATO and in Latin America, just prior to or simultaneously with the President's address.

221. The President's statement at 1900, October 22, described the nature of the Soviet move, the U.S. determination to block it, and a program of action designed to that end. The seven points encompassed were:

a. Imposition of a quarantine on Cuba to halt the further introduction of offensive equipment, the quarantine to be extended to other types of cargo and carriers if needed.

b. Increased close surveillance of Cuba.

c. The regarding of any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

d. Evacuation of dependents from Guantanamo and reinforcement of the base.

e. The calling of an immediate meeting of the OAS to consider the threat.

f. The calling of an emergency meeting of the Security Council of the U.N. and the presentation of a resolution demanding the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba under U.N. supervision before the quarantine would be lifted.

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g. A personal call upon Premier Khrushchev to halt and eliminate the threat to the peace involved in the Russian moves.¹

222. A copy of the President's address and a personal letter to Premier Khrushchev were sent to Moscow for delivery by the U.S. Ambassador just at the time the President was to speak. In Washington the Soviet ambassador had been summoned to the Secretary of State's office at 1800 hours on the 22nd where he met with the Secretary and a group of senior officials for half an hour, at which time he also was given a copy of the statement the President was about to make.

223. Shortly after the President's address to the nation on October 22, the State Department sent to all Embassies and Posts an amplification for use in dealing with local governments. It sketched out the rationale behind the seven-point program, attempting to anticipate reactions to it, and providing ammunition to meet those reactions.

224. The message emphasized that for discussions with foreign governments the restrained nature of the U.S. program should be stressed. Minimum force would be used to accomplish the U.S. objective in the quarantine in order to provide maximum opportunity to get a peaceful settlement. The President's final remarks were meant to indicate that the U.S. was receptive to proposals for a high-level meeting with the Soviets.

225. The objective of the U.S. was to obtain dismantlement of the offensive facilities. This would be sought in a

¹New York Times, October 23, 1962.

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resolution to the U.N. Security Council. If the Soviets vetoed this resolution and did not begin to remove the weapons, the issue would be taken to the General Assembly. In the meantime the operational portions of the President's program would be pursued.

226. The OAS Council would be asked on the morning of October 23 to constitute itself into a consultative committee under the Rio Treaty, and the U.S. would then present it with a resolution embodying the President's seven points for approval. It was expected that majority support would be obtained. However, the message stressed that the U.S. looked upon the action as a use of force to meet a threat to the peace and that the legal basis for the quarantine did not depend upon OAS approval, but rather on the inherent right of self-defense. The U.S. did not regard the quarantine as an act of war, and the message cited Article 2(3) of the U.N. Charter as authorizing the OAS to consider the threat to the peace posed by the Soviet military capability in Cuba. The U.S. considered the quarantine as a sanction appropriate within the OAS framework.

227. The message distinguished between a quarantine and a blockade, pointing out that while the former does have some elements of the latter, the latter is usually associated with the conduct of war. In this case, the quarantine was to be applied for purely defensive reasons.

228. The message reassured U.S. representatives that the U.S. was prepared for repercussions anywhere in the world. In regard to Berlin, it was noted especially that there were available comprehensive contingency plans ready for implementation.

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229. To questions regarding an alleged parallelism between Cuba and the arrangements the U.S. has under NATO for positioning IRDN's in Italy and Turkey, U.S. representatives were to draw a sharp distinction, pointing out that the missiles in Italy and Turkey had been installed as a result of the decision of the NATO Council at the December 1957 meeting of the Heads of Government in Paris. The action was publicly announced and was taken in response to repeated Soviet threats that they had medium- and intermediate-range missiles and were ready to use them.

230. Partially to meet any objections to the unilateral character of the U.S. move, the message emphasized that all Allied Governments had been advised and informed beforehand. This warning had been supplemented by comprehensive briefings just prior to the President's speech for all NATO, OAS, SEATO, and CETO mission chiefs here, as well as for national missions.¹

231. This, then, was the policy adopted by the United States. It now remained both to await the Soviet and Cuban reactions (these might not be synonymous) and to prepare further measures toward gaining our objectives if the Soviets chose to ignore the quarantine and its associated steps. These further measures included not only those necessary to implement the quarantine and to prepare to implement contingency plans for attack against Cuba, but also to adopt the strongest deterrent posture against the possibility of general war.

¹Department of State, Circular Telegram 725, October 22, 1962, UNCLASSIFIED.

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IV. POLICY COORDINATION: OVERSEAS UNIFIED
COMMANDS AND ALLIED POWERS

A. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

232. The American action against Cuba in October 1962 was planned and launched without any prior concert of Allied states. The absence of consultation was a consequence both of the unique sensitivity of the circumstances and of the shortness of time available for the development and implementation of an effective American response to the Soviet thrust. However, once that response was prepared and launched, it became a matter of major concern to coordinate the action with Allied states, primarily in Latin America and in Europe.

233. There was need, in the first place, to gain political support of an action by which the United States hoped to achieve its objective through the use of limited military force plus political pressure. If this combination were to fail, political support and sympathetic understanding would be highly useful when direct assault on Cuba was undertaken.

234. In addition to the political motivation, there were military ones. The first concerned Latin America and the danger possibly arising from revolts against the several governments to whose assistance the U.S. then would have to go. The second was based upon the potential danger of a Soviet riposte to the U.S. action in the form of moves against U.S. interests elsewhere in the world, especially in Europe. The possibility of the development of a general war could not be discounted.

235. This coordination with Allied states took several forms and raised a variety of problems for the U.S. national decision makers. The more important of these will be examined in this chapter.

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236. There was, furthermore, a second and complementary aspect to the problem of coordination which requires joint examination. This was primarily a U.S. military command problem, involving the overseas Unified Commands.

237. The intensive preparations that began in Washington following the positive identification of Soviet offensive missile capability in Cuba on October 15 were tightly bound by security. So necessary was it to prevent a leak which might possibly compromise the whole U.S. action that even the overseas Unified Commanders were not formally notified until almost the last minute. That this increased their normal problem of coordination with Washington on the one hand and with local Allied nations on the other was fully recognized but was considered unavoidable.

238. It will be recalled that shortly after the President's address to the nation on October 22nd, the State Department dispatched a lengthy cable to all its diplomatic posts, explaining the U.S. course of action ¹

239. The cable is interesting since it encompasses so many of the aspects of inter-Allied coordination that appeared in the crisis. This chapter will examine these in detail and the political-military measures associated with them. The concentration of attention, in terms of Allied concern, was on NATO and Latin America. While it was conceivable that the Communists might respond anywhere around the globe to the U.S. actions over Cuba, the greatest threats lay in those two areas. Accordingly, the military coordination problems of USCINCEUR and USCINCARIB were primary.

¹See Chapter III, "The U.S. Basic Decision."

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Alerting the Unified Commands

240. It was not until 1214Z on October 20 that the JCS sent a message to all Unified Commanders to the effect that the increased state of tension with respect to Cuba could lead to military action. It promised to keep the Unified Commanders informed, and would direct a higher DEFCON as required, noting



241. This was followed by a formal warning message at 1814Z on October 21, announcing that the President had blockade operations under consideration. It warned that a reaction by the Cuban military forces could lead to U.S. air strikes and an invasion of Cuba. Preparations for both were in progress. These actions, if initiated, it was recognized, would probably result in use of force against Soviet military and civilian personnel in Cuba and would thereby directly challenge the prestige of the Soviet Union. Under these circumstances, the reaction of the Soviets could not be predicted. Therefore, it was imperative under circumstances which could arise to present the strongest possible deterrent to any course of Soviet military action. The U.S. must unequivocally demonstrate it was ready militarily to meet and to defeat retaliatory Soviet moves at whatever level was necessary. At the same time, the message cautioned against actions in other areas which might be considered provocative or which could create civil alarm.

242. The JCS warned the CINCS that, should action include air attack and invasion, the reinforcement capabilities for

¹JCS Message 6807 to all CINCS, 201214Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

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the European and Pacific Commands, as reflected in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, applicable for general war, might be delayed. All commanders were ordered to review their applicable plans and were to be prepared to report critical limitations to the conduct of general war operations in their respective areas.¹

243. Defense Condition Three was established for all U.S. forces at 2300Z October 22, with USCINCEUR being authorized to exercise his discretion in complying with this directive in the light of the requirement for nonprovocation expressed in the JCS warning message. (The JCS requested that as SACEUR, USCINCEUR use his influence with the North Atlantic Council to get NATO to assume a comparable defense posture.²)

244. With the imposition of MINIMIZE worldwide at 2300Z on the 22nd, the process of alerting was completed.³

245. While formal notification of the CINCS came late in the week of preparation, undoubtedly some indication of a forthcoming crisis had reached all of them. Individual Service messages and information copies were already circulating. CINCPAC received a strong hint in a JCS message on air defense of the Canal Zone on the 19th⁴ and in the order to transfer two LSTs to CINCLANT.⁵ CINCPAC got a similar indication from the JCS order on the 19th to assemble immediately amphibious shipping in anticipation of possible transferring of operational control of the 5th MEB's sea echelon to CINCLANT.⁶

¹JCS Message 6830 to all CINCS, 211814Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

²JCS Message 6864 to all CINCS, 221809Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³JCS Message 6883 to all CINCS, 222300Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

⁴JCS Message 6778 to CINCLANT, 191720Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁵JCS Message 6787 to CINCPAC, 192037Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁶JCS Message 6795 to CINCPAC, 192231Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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241. Of the four overseas Unified Commands, NELM was least likely to be immediately involved in a Communist reaction, with PAC coming next. The two most critical were EUR and CARIB. While it was thought to be almost certain that CINGARIB would be immediately called upon for support action to help suppress rebellions against Latin American governments, the possibility of a Soviet riposte in Europe, even if somewhat less immediate, would be infinitely more serious. Yet it would appear that in the nature of surrounding circumstances, USCINCEUR received least advance notice of all the CINCS.

B. COORDINATION WITH NATO

247. The military-political problems of coordination with NATO break down into three convenient aspects. First was the problem of alerting U.S. forces in Europe; then came informing the NATO Allies of the U.S. moves against Cuba; finally there was the matter of NATO political and military reaction.

The Alerting of U.S. Forces¹

248. As hints of the forthcoming crisis began to reach the European Command toward the end of the week of October 14, the dilemmas to be faced should the Soviets retaliate in Europe became painfully clear and made the lack of more adequate information on developments in Washington appear not only frustrating but highly dangerous. The feeling was articulated in a message to USCINCEUR from the Commander, USAFE, on the 19th. General Landon wrote on the basis of hints and strong inferences from messages and information copies that action might be in the offing in connection with [CINCLANT OPLANS 312 and 314]. He pointed

¹For a discussion of the formal mechanism involved in alerting the CINCS, see Enclosure B of this study, titled "Procedural Analysis of J-3 Command and Control Operations during the Cuban Crisis, October 1962."

out that any contemplated action which exacerbated East-West relations would likely bring increased tensions or action in Berlin, in preparation for which certain precautionary measures should be taken to improve the readiness posture of U.S. forces. The piecemeal information received thus far, he asserted, raised questions as to just what may be expected; for example, if actions elsewhere in support of Caribbean operations should require all available forces, could he expect to receive the TAC additive forces on which USAFE relied heavily to meet Berlin contingencies? He felt it was vital to the U.S. posture to know now if he would be expected to deal with Berlin with forces currently available.¹

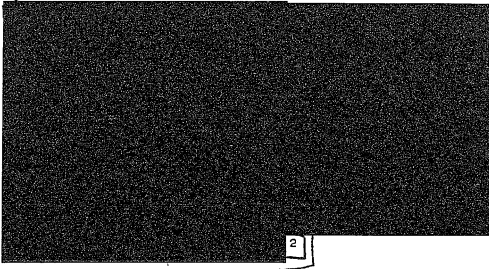
249. There is no record immediately available of the answer from USCINCEUR. The problems of reinforcement for Europe and the reconstitution of a general war reserve were to continue to receive attention, although not part of this report. The important point here was the inhibiting influence which lack of information appears to have had, since it may be assumed Army planners experienced similar reactions to those of USAFE.

250. Any such 

¹Message from Commander USAFE to USCINCEUR, 191829Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

measures, he insisted, should be taken through NATO, and there was presently no intelligence available to the Allied Command Europe which would indicate that an increased alert posture might be appropriate in the near future because of the Cuban situation.¹

251. The political sensitivity of USCINCEUR's dual role was threatened at the same time by USCINCEUR component commanders



252. Following the formal JCS warning message of 211814Z October, USCINCEUR was notified that Dean Acheson would brief the North Atlantic Council on the Cuban situation two hours before the President's speech, October 22 (then set for 1900, Washington time). This JCS answer to USCINCEUR's message of the previous day also stated that Ambassador Finletter would seek NAC instructions to NATO commanders with regard to an alert posture.

¹Message from USCINCEUR to JCS, 211436Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message from USCINCEUR to CJCS, 222552Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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253. At 0925Z on the 22nd, USCINCEUR replied to the formal JCS warning message of the previous day, stating that his knowledge of the Cuban situation was limited to the two JCS warning messages. Thus, he felt he had no basis for commenting on the substance of the action proposed. He stated that if the situation was serious enough to warrant sending Acheson over to brief the North Atlantic Council and to ask for a NATO alert, he should have been given before this time some information on the "why" as well as the "what" in order to discharge properly his responsibilities which could rapidly become critical.

254. Using the two points raised in the JCS formal warning message, he stated that he could not comment on whether a NATO alert would be "considered provocative" since he did not know the background, but such action would certainly create "civil alarm" of a very high order. He trusted also that the consequences of a rejection by the NATO Council of an American request for NATO forces to assume an alert posture were not being overlooked, since he felt that unless the case for such an action were overwhelming and dramatic, opposition may be expected. Furthermore, it should be assumed that even discussion of the subject would very shortly become public knowledge in Europe.¹

255. USCINCEUR-SACEUR's dilemma was recognized by a personal letter from President Kennedy, acknowledging concern for the impact of the Cuban situation upon NATO and upon General Norstad's role as SACEUR. The President regretted the inability to widen the circle of discussion during the previous week and especially to enlist the prior support of the NATO Governments, and expressed confidence in the General's ability to help the U.S. over a difficult situation in the NATO relationship.²

¹Message from USCINCEUR to CJCS, 220925Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message from the President to General Norstad (JCS pass to), 221822Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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256. USCINCEUR responded to the JCS message of 221809Z, which had established DEFOON 3 but had authorized USCINCEUR discretionary power in the decision, by stating that in view of SACZUR's action placing all ACE forces in the same precautionary posture, he had not placed USEUCOM forces in DEFOON 3 status. Instead, these forces were directed to take military precautionary measures in accordance with those recommended to all ACE force commanders and Ministries of Defense. Such measures included the intensification of intelligence collection; increased security and anti-sabotage plans; review of alert procedures and emergency plans; the manning of operational centers at reduced strength; and checks of equipment and supplies.

257. No measures would be taken which could be considered provocative or which might disclose operational plans, and all actions would be taken as far as possible without public notice.¹

258. Further, to avoid excessive alarm, USCINCEUR imposed MINIMIZE only for messages addressed to areas outside EUCOM.²

259. It would appear that USCINCEUR decided to enforce a greater degree of stringency the next day, since he reported that he had imposed MINIMIZE on USEUCOM effective 241631Z October. Furthermore, effective 241650Z he had directed an increased state of readiness for Hq. USEUCOM, and had ordered the airborne command post to be continuously in the air as of 241205Z.³

260. No reason has been found for this apparent change. On the whole, USCINCEUR's approach to the Cuban crisis reflected the prevailing European attitude that this was not a European matter

¹Message from USCINCEUR to JCS, 230009Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message from USCINCEUR to JCS, 230115Z, October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

³SITREP, USCINCEUR to AIG JJO, 251225Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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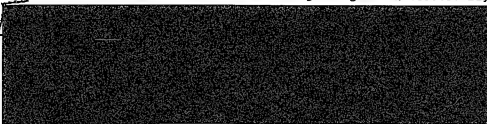
and that any attempt to involve Europe in it would be unnecessarily provocative and could only make a tense situation worse.

261. It might be noted here that there were two other cases in the Cuban crisis involving political complications about the alerting of U.S. forces to DEFCON 3. One of these involved the U.S. forces in Korea. The Commander, U.S. Forces Korea, informed CINCPAC that establishment of the higher DEFCON for his command dictated that the Republic of Korea forces maintain a similar alert status. It was his intention to place ROK forces under DEFCON 3 at the same time as his U.S. forces, but he was advised by CINCPAC not to take action until receipt of specific instructions from the JCS.¹

262



263. A much more serious case involved Canadian participation in NORAD. While USCONAD went on DEFCON 3 at 2300Z on October 22,



Thereafter, all Canadian military forces

¹Message from ADMINO CINCPAC to JCS, enclosing message from COMUSK, 230325Z, October, CONFIDENTIAL.

²Message from CINCPAC Korea to CG USA, USN, USAF Korea, 231105Z, October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

³Message from Canadian Joint Staff, Washington, D. C. to JCS, 24 October 1962, SECRET.

⁴Message from CINCPAC to JCS, 241830Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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assured a state of readiness both in Canada and Europe, all readiness measures being closely coordinated to be compatible with the U.S. posture.¹

264. At the same time the NMCC was authorized to notify the Canadian Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the Canadian Joint Staff, Washington, D. C., of any changes in DEFCON for LANT, PAC, CONAD, AL.²

Informing the Allied Powers

265. It will be recalled from the chapter on precrisis U.S. policy toward Cuba that until the moment when the Soviet missile bases in Cuba were exposed, our European and Latin American Allies generally took a less than sympathetic view of American policy toward and thinking about Castro's Cuba. In the case of Europe, it was widely felt that Cuba had become an American obsession which blinded us to even the possibility of a long-term rapprochement with Cuba. In Latin America, "Fidelismo" apparently attracted large segments of the population. Not merely was Cuba supported by Leftist groups, but without doubt lingering animosities toward the United States were sharpened by Castro's successful defiance of American hostility. There had been some change in Latin America during the previous year as Castro openly embraced Communism and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it was difficult to gauge the real measure of support Castro could muster in Latin America.

266. Consequently, it was felt by the U.S. decision makers that much depended upon the nature of the presentation of our case to these nations.

¹J3 Cuba SITREP 10-62, as of 010500Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

²J3M-1245-62, 24 October 1962, SECRET.

267. Information concerning the forthcoming American move was transmitted to the NATO allies in a number of ways. The responsibility was kept by the President himself.

268. On Sunday, October 21, letters from the President were prepared for Prime Minister Macmillan, President de Gaulle, Chancellor Adenauer, Premier Nehru, Premier Disfembaker, Premier Fanfani, Mayor Brandt of West Berlin, and a number of other leading Allied leaders. These were sent in code to the U.S. Embassies of the respective countries for delivery the next day. Altogether individual letters were sent by the President to forty-three Heads of Government, many of these being outside the NATO area.¹

269. During the day of the 22nd, Prime Minister Macmillan was personally briefed by U.S. Ambassador Bruce, President de Gaulle by Mr. Acheson, and Chancellor Adenauer by Ambassador Dowling. It was later repeatedly reported on good authority in the press that the President had also personally phoned these three leaders. However, no confirmation of this has been found in the available records.

270. Mr. Livingston Merchant was called in to prepare for a mission to Ottawa to brief the Canadian Government.

271. As previously mentioned, Mr. Acheson flew to Paris to brief the North Atlantic Council two hours before the President's address to the nation. At 1915 EST, the ambassadors of forty odd nations in NATO, CENTO, SEATO and a number of

¹ Chronology of the Cuban Crisis; drawn from DOD, State Department, and White House material. No indication of authorship no date. In J-3 files in Battle Staff material. Appears to be official release.

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other friendly states were assembled in an auditorium at the State Department for a briefing by the Undersecretary of State. At the end of the briefing the ambassadors watched the President's address on a giant television screen. Following the President's address, a briefing was given to ambassadors of all other countries.¹

272. Briefings continued through the week, and J-3 was directed to give daily briefings to the NATO Standing Group.² The Director of Operations of J-3 had earlier been directed to provide daily briefings for the Chairman of the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington.³

273. A comment may be made here regarding U.S. policy in the U.N. during the crisis. The U.S. made full use of the U.N. as a public forum in which to maximize the embarrassment and confusion of the Russians, at the same time indicating the reasonableness of the U.S. actions. In this regard, the U.N. proved extremely useful in the political part of the U.S. offensive. However, the U.S. was obviously under no illusions as to the value of opinion in the 'neutral' states. The cynical double standard revealed by the neutralists at the Belgrade Conference in September 1961 had fully shown how unreliable the uncommitted states were even when the U.S. position was unassailably in the right.

NATO Political and Military Reactions

274. As a body, NATO lined up solidly behind the U.S. position, but this was not done at a uniform pace by the individual states.

¹New York Times, October 22, 1962.

²J-3 Master Check List for Cuban Operations, October 26, 1962,
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³J3M-1445-62, 24 October 1962, SECRET.

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The fourteen other members of the NATO Permanent Council in Paris took under urgent consideration the question of a military alert, but it would appear from the failure to implement a general alert that their appreciation of the peril in Europe, in terms of a Soviet riposte there, may have differed from the American view. However, the matter of force alerts in Europe was a somewhat different matter from political support of the American position.

275. The general official attitude prevailing may well have been expressed by President de Gaulle for most of the rest of NATO. ¹Information from the British Embassy in Paris reported a discussion between the British Ambassador with the French President in which de Gaulle said he would follow the British lead in sending instructions to the French U.N. delegation to support the U.S. resolution. President de Gaulle was reported to have said that as long as the situation concerned only Cuba, he was willing to follow American initiatives in the matter, but that should the area of action expand, he would insist upon tripartite consultation. ²

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276. On October 23rd, the British government declared its support of the American position. On the same day Chancellor Adenauer wrote President Kennedy, expressing appreciation for the concern over Berlin evinced in the President's speech, and stating that he felt the events in Cuba were the most serious threat that the Russians had ever made against the Free World.² Prime Minister Macmillan, addressing Commons on the 24th, again supported the U.S. position in its objectives, but did not specifically endorse the U.S. quarantine. The Canadian,

¹Department of State Message from American Embassy, Paris, to Secretary of State, 231252Z October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

²Department of State, Message from American Embassy, Bonn, to Secretary of State, 231601Z October 1962, SECRET.

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Netherlands, and Italian governments endorsed the U.S. stand that day, but France remained "officially silent," presumably because of the lack of prior consultation.¹ By the 25th, only Portugal of all NATO remained noncommittal.

277. However, despite governmental approval, the U.S. move was generally coolly received at best in the European press. Minor anti-American demonstrations occurred on both sides of the Iron Curtain, specifically on the NATO side, in London. The publication of the official U.S. photographs of the Soviet missile sites on the 24th, however, brought an almost abrupt change in European public opinion, swinging it around to a much more sympathetic position.²

278. The military responses were equally erratic. It would appear that while SACEUR had established certain precautionary steps for the NATO forces under his command instead of DEFCON 3, each nation responded in its own way and according to its own appreciation of the situation when it came to national forces not under SHAPE control.

279. It was reported that British forces were alerted, but this has not been confirmed by the author.³ By midnight of the 24th, five countries had responded to one degree or another. [REDACTED] reported precautionary measures taken to increase alert [REDACTED]

¹New York Times, October 25, 1962.

²J-3 Supplementary Cuba SITREP, 242000Z October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Prime Minister Macmillan revealed in June 1963 that the British Bomber Command, and specifically the V-Bomber force, had been put on alert.

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280. [REDACTED] 112

281. Apparently, the military chiefs in all these states were from the beginning enthusiastically in support of the U.S. action, but were unable to raise alert levels until directed by the political authorities. Neither these authorities nor, for that matter, SACEUR, felt the need to do so. This may have been largely a matter of outlook, of difference in perspective when viewing the Cuban crisis from Europe instead of the U.S. There was also very likely a marked reluctance to do anything which might aid in provoking or providing an excuse for a Soviet riposte in Europe.

282. In the actual implementation of the quarantine, Allied cooperation was soon achieved. The British on the 24th asked their shipowners to cooperate and to permit U.S. search parties aboard their vessels.² There were no problems with NATO on this point. However, some confusion and unspoken disagreement did arise in the never fully developed American effort to establish an air quarantine to match the sea effort. This effort was aimed primarily at African states over whose territory Bloc aircraft would fly, but some aircraft did travel via the United Kingdom and Gander, Newfoundland [REDACTED] 113

Message from MAAG Germany, to USCINCEUR, JCS, OSD, 251800Z October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

²J-3 Cuba SITREP, 242000Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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Obligations under International Civil Airlines Organization with the desire not to run counter to U.S. objectives.

283.

C. COORDINATION WITH LATIN AMERICA

284. While the U.S. desire for Latin American support in the Cuban quarantine was essentially political in nature, there were positive military advantages which might flow from such support. The blockade plan as issued by the JCS on the 22nd of October included a statement which said:

"Prior to or immediately following the Presidential Proclamation, efforts will be made to enlist the aid of Allied or friendly nations in enforcing the blockade. CINCLANT should cooperate fully with such nations and take every advantage of their contributions to increase the efficiency of the blockade and to reduce the commitment of U.S. forces."

285. This point seems to have borne more weight than was generally realized, in view of the concern felt (as illustrated by the European case cited earlier) over the commitment of nearly all available U.S. contingency resources to possible Cuban operations.

¹Dept. of State, Telegram Ottawa to Secretary of State, 230345Z, October 1962, SECRET.

²Dept. of State, Circular Telegram 875, 082237Z, November 1962, CONFIDENTIAL

³JCS Message 6848, to CINCLANT, 221111Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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286. The steps followed in preparation for Latin American coordination resembled those taken in Europe.

287. On October 19, all U.S. Ambassadors to Latin America were ordered to return to their posts. On the 20th, the U.S. Information Agency prepared to go on a twenty-four-hour a day schedule of transmission in Spanish. On the same day the Department of State sent "preposition messages" to all Latin American posts, subject to the "go" signal on the 22nd, indicating the course of action to be followed. These messages alerted the U.S. posts to the possibility of outbreaks, and procedures were to be initiated for the protection of the Embassy or Consulate, its classified contents, and its personnel. On the 22nd, nine radio stations were requested by the White House to broadcast the President's speech in Spanish to Latin America.¹

288. The Inter-American Defense Board happened to be meeting in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, at this time and the JCS took advantage of this opportunity to reach the Latin American members. The senior U.S. Army and U.S. Navy representatives were requested to obtain the earliest possible briefing from the U.S. Ambassador in Honduras on current developments and on U.S. plans for implementing multinational action in regard to Cuba. They were informed that the President desired the widest possible OAS participation in the actions against Cuba, including provision of naval forces, and were urged to exert pressure to convince their Latin American colleagues, subsequent to the President's speech.²

¹Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, cited previously, UNCLASSIFIED.

²Message from CJCS G360 to U.S. ARMA, Honduras, 222141Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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289. On the 23rd, the Secretary of State addressed the OAS Organ of Consultation in Washington at 0900 EST. At 1500 the OAS reconvened and by 1645 EST, by a 19 to 0 vote, it had adopted the U.S.-sponsored resolution backing the quarantine and urging immediate removal of the Soviet missiles.¹ The sole missing vote was Uruguay, on a procedural matter. She made the vote unanimous shortly afterward.

290. [As in the case of the NATO countries, the Latin American states followed their declaration of support with strictly individual follow-up actions. Each was governed by a wide degree of constraints and motivations, so that collective action really remained only a symbol.] Their responses to the U.S. suggestions of active participation were extremely erratic, and none displayed flesh as well as spirit until the heat in the missile crisis had diminished to a large extent. In fact, as late as November 5th, [the OAS was unanimously approving an Argentine proposal calling for the coordination of hemispheric assistance in the Cuban situation among the Latin American Republics "to establish coordinated and efficient action of their combined forces" in helping maintain the quarantine.]² *BIAS*

291. Before examining Latin American reactions to the crisis, it is necessary to consider what plans and preparations the U.S. had in hand for the protection of Latin American governments and for the protection of its own interests in the area in the face of possible Cuban or Communist counterpressures. American policy toward the Latin American states may be viewed as a two-part operation summarized in the two words 'protection' and 'contribution.' However, we could not elicit contributions unless we could be sure those governments would be able to maintain themselves. This was the job of CINCARIB.

¹Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, UNCLASSIFIED.

²2-3 Cuba SITREP 15-62, 030500Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

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The Threat and CARIBCOM Capabilities

292. It was generally expected that the Communist reaction in Latin America would be strong enough to require the use of U.S. military force in at least one place. On the 19th of October the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Gilpatrick, wrote to the JCS with two requests:

a. That CINCARIB be instructed to prepare lists of control measures, riot control equipment, etc., needed by Latin American states in the event of U.S. action against Cuba. He emphasized that we must be ready to support CINCARIB to assist shaky governments in the face of large demonstrations.

b. That it be determined which Latin American states could assist in a blockade through the OAS or by other means. He wished to know which states had naval resources to assist us, which ones we could count on, and how we could approach them

293. The JCS, in its reply the next day, said that it felt that non-Communist opposition elements would be disturbed, but not to the point of violent disturbance either against the U.S. or their own governments. The Communists could be expected to exploit the U.S. action, and would foment a wave of violence and terrorism both to distract the U.S. and to prevent their own governments from supporting the U.S.

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295. In the matter of specific internal reactions, it was felt that the most serious disorder would occur in Brazil and Bolivia, with lesser trouble in Ecuador and Guatemala and a strong potential for trouble in Venezuela and Colombia.

296. Finally, in the matter of expected assistance, it was felt that only Colombia, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic were likely to be willing to participate, for a maximum total of eight destroyers and ten frigates.¹

297. It is interesting to note that in the actual event only the last item mentioned came close to fulfilling prediction.

298. The JCS on the 21st sent CINCARIB a message encompassing much the same sort of questions as had been raised by the Gilpatric letter. CINCARIB was told that in the event of direct action against Cuba, violent Communist reactions might occur and requests for U.S. aid must be anticipated. Answers were urgently requested from him in regard to: (1) the countries where we could expect the most serious reactions; (2) CINCARIB's estimate of the capabilities of these governments to control disturbances, (3) the U.S. support these governments would need in the form of mobile forces, supplies and equipment; (4) CINCARIB's estimated support requirements in terms of personnel, equipment, supplies over and above present resources in the event it should become necessary to execute any CARIBCOON contingency plans; (5) the location and quantity of riot control equipment available in the command.²

299.  B1/11

¹JCS 2304/74, October 20, 1962, TOP SECRET, RESTRICTED DATA.

²JCS Message 6819 to CINCARIB, 210434Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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300.

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301. Three days later the JCS again warned CINCARIB that disturbances might well occur in several countries simultaneously, and requested that he extend his earlier appraisal of his requirements to include the minimum means estimated necessary to meet simultaneously requests for U.S. aid that were likely to come from critical countries.²

302.

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¹Message CINCARIB to JCS, 211150Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Message 6961 to CINCARIB, 242304Z, October 1962. TOP SECRET

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303. As to his own capabilities, CINCARIB replied that he could provide the joint task force headquarters and the airborne companies for the two Task Force Alphas, but he could provide airlift for only one TF Alpha. The joint task force headquarters and airborne battalion of one TF Bravo could also come from CARIBCOM. USSTRICOM would have to provide the rest.¹ CINCARIB had one brigade of two tailored "battle groups" as his Canal Zone combat force, something under 2000 men. With only six C-130 aircraft as airlift, his task in the face of more than one call for help was overwhelming.

304. Apparently the last exchange with CINCARIB raised such concern in the JCS that steps were immediately begun to reinforce him. CINCSTRICOM and CINCARIB were asked for recommendations on the best method of augmenting CARIBCOM.² The JCS was thinking in terms of additional U.S. forces whose presence in CARIBCOM would provide both a deterrent and an immediate response capability for action or a show of force in one or more Latin American countries. In view of the residual force capabilities available to STRICOM after OPLAN 312/316 requirements were covered, the two CINCs were requested to design an austere augmentation force requirement.³ L/H/S

¹Message CINCARIB to JCS, 251900Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Message 7108 to CINCSTRIKE, CINCARIB, 301342Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³JCS Message 7175 to CINCSTRIKE, CINCARIB, 020356Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

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305. [E] In the exchange CINCARIB outlined both his estimate of forces and their missions. Forces deployed to CARIBCOM should be prepared for further deployment to any objective listed in the Command's contingency plans.

[REDACTED]

306. This, then, was the U.S. concept for the most extreme form of coordination with Latin America. Agreement was promptly reached on increasing CINCARIB's capability to carry it out and approved by the JCS on November 11. The augmentation became CINCSTRIKE OPLAN 2-c, but was never carried out.

307. Despite the unexpectedly mild Communist reaction in Latin America, the fear of further trouble was slow in dying. On October 31, the J-3 Cuba SITREP reported that Communist activities in many Latin American states had increased, possibly in response to Cuban directive, and that government plans were underway in all twenty countries to counteract the threat.² However, by November 4th, the J-3 SITREP was reporting that the current major fear was of widespread sabotage only, the Soviet retreat apparently having thrown local Communist parties into such confusion that overt action was no longer possible.³

¹ Message CINCARIB to CINCSTRIKE, 032110Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

² J-3 Cuba SITREP 9-62, 310500Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³ J-3 Cuba Supplementary SITREP 26, 042100Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

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308. Another facet of the overall CARIB. W capabilities problem concerned the air defense of the Panama Canal. This was a question of U.S. defensive capabilities in contrast to the essentially offensive ones described above.

309. The subject was raised by JCS when it advised CINCARIB that if a blockade of Cuba were ordered without offensive action against the Cuban Air Force, the possibility existed of air attacks against Ramey AFB, Roosevelt Roads NS, and the Panama Canal. His recommendations for augmentation of the air defenses of the Canal were requested.¹

310. [CINCARIB's succinct rep.y was that the Canal Zone was "virtually defenseless against air attack now." He listed the current air defenses (two FAWK battalions and two self-propelled 40mm gun batteries), the actions necessary to utilize to the fullest the existing limited potential, and the very sizable augmentation forces needed, predicated his requirements on a nuclear threat.]

311. The last word on the subject came from the JCS on the 25th stating that CINCARIB's air defense requirements were "under review, considering the estimated threat to the Canal and the resources available when weighed against worldwide responsibilities."³ Presumably the threat was estimated as extremely low, since the Cubans seemed unlikely to strike first, and by the time they could respond to OPLAN 312, their capability to hit the Canal would be gone.

¹JCS Message 5778 to CINCARIB, CINCLANT 191720Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message from CINCARIB to JCS, 220406Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

³JCS Message 5957 to CINCARIB, 250329Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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U.S. Arms Aid to Latin America

312. When requests for U.S. aid actually came to pass, it was for arms and not troops, and the requests themselves were nowhere near as great or widespread as had been expected. The JCS warned CINCARIB on the 21st to be prepared to give riot control support to Panama and other Latin American countries within the limits of his capability, and on the 23rd, U.S. Ambassadors in countries considered critical made commitments, personally delivered to the various heads of state, to supply riot munitions from the Canal Zone stocks as needed.¹ CINCARIB reported on the 24th that the first recipients were the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, and Chile, commenting that requests received to date, with the exception of that from the Dominican Republic, appeared excessive. He asked too for immediate replenishment of the CARIBCOM stock of similar items -- gas grenades, shot-guns, ammunition, radio equipment.²

313. Thereafter the action along this line was confined to arms deliveries to CINCARIB for transmission to Bolivia, Chile, Venezuela, El Salvador and Colombia during the next week. With the obvious decline in the likelihood of trouble after November 1st or thereabouts, requests for riot control equipment ceased. In total the quantities discussed had not been particularly great, and had imposed no major strain on CARIBCOM. Furthermore, additional supplies of riot control equipment were flown to CARIBCOM on the 26th to augment the stockpile and further augmentations were prepared during the next few days.³

¹Message CINCARIB to JCS, 230542Z, October 1962, SECRET.

²Message CINCFIS to JCS, 242050Z, October 1962, SECRET.

³JCS Message 6995 to C/S USAF, CINCARIB, 260250Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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The Panama Canal Transit Issue

314. CINCARIB's connection with actual quarantine operations came about through a curious episode involving the legal status of the Panama Canal. The incident illustrated the type of unforeseen international complication which can arise in a contingency operation. The issue apparently had been raised as early as October 19 in Navy circles, the Navy Flag Plot log recording that the question of an arms ship attempting to pass through the Canal had been sent to Op 60 for comment on the legal aspects. No further action is recorded, however.¹

315. The subject was next raised by CINCLANT on the 22nd, recommending to the JCS that the Blockade of Cuba Plan be amended to charge CINCARIB with the prevention of the passage through the Canal of ships carrying prohibited material destined for Cuba.² The JCS so directed CINCARIB on the 23rd.³ CINCARTO, alert to the international significance of such an action, promptly pointed out in reply the special status of the Canal under the 1903 Convention with Panama and the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901 with Great Britain, by which the neutrality of the Canal was affirmed and its freedom of passage to all ships of commerce and war of all nations declared. He suggested that if a ship carrying quarantined cargo were willing to unload its cargo at Balboa, it would be permitted to transit the Canal. In any case, CINCARIB felt the measures were sufficiently significant to require a formal statement from the U.S. Government to world shipping circles.⁴

¹Navy Flag Plot Log, 192145Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCLANT to JCS, 222234Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³JCS Message 6902 to CINCARIB, 231716Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message CINCARIB to JCS, 232244Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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316. The Governor of the Canal Zone fully supported CINCARIB's position and urged that the Government of Panama be advised before any further steps were taken or announcements made.¹

317. The effect of these two telegrams was immediate. The issue had obviously been overlooked in the urgency of planning during that week and, in the absence of an immediate alternative, the JCS ordered CINCLANT to hold all action on the matter of Canal transit until further advised.² It would appear that CINCLANT's original suggestion had not been cleared with the Department of State, despite its obviously political content. The JCS had missed its significance, and it had not been caught by the POLAD at CINCLANT, although this is precisely the reason why POLADs are assigned to Unified Command headquarters

318. The Department of the Army notified the Governor of the Canal Zone that CINCARIB would be instructed only to notify masters of designated Cuba-bound vessels that their ships would be subject to quarantine action after passage of the Canal. It was specifically desired not to use U.S. control of the Canal for quarantine purposes. The creation of an international precedent could be a future source of difficulty elsewhere in the world, and the uneasy relationship with Panama further exacerbated.

319. However, these considerations were not to prevent a thorough inspection of any vessel if there were reason to suspect its passage threatened the security of the Canal. Established procedures for the inspection of Sino-Soviet Bloc vessels (set by the Department of State-Department of

¹Message Governor of Canal Zone to Secretary of the Army, 232242Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Message 6927 to CINCARIB, 240442Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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Defense agreement of May 1957) were to be continued. If more stringent security measures were desired, the agreement provided for delay of a Bloc vessel pending Secretary of the Army-DoD-Department of State action on the recommendations of the Governor and CINCARIB.

320. [No public announcement was to be made, in order not to draw unnecessary attention to the issue. The government of Panama could be informed by the Governor that more extensive inspection would be made of transiting ships on an individual basis, but that passage would not be denied any ship conforming to security regulations.]

321. These instructions were formalized by JCS two days later. [Transit of a ship was not to be delayed merely because of the presence of prohibited material unless such material immediately threatened the security of the Canal. Results of inspections were to be forwarded to CINCLANT and, in the case of vessels carrying prohibited materials, CINCARIB was to subject the ship to air surveillance upon departing the Canal Zone until it passed beyond the range of surveillance or until CINCLANT accepted responsibility.] The operational aspects of this whole episode are treated in more detail in the chapter on the Naval Quarantine.

Latin American Military Support

322. While U.S. quarantine operations were based upon the expectation that U.S. forces only would do the job, as they also would in the further event of [PLANS 312-316] being implemented, it was nevertheless considered very desirable to gain some active Latin American support. Mere declarations of support were as evanescent as any words, but active

¹Message from OUSA Department of Army, to Governor of the Canal Zone, 251422Z, October 1962, SECRET.

²JCS Message 7002 to CINCARIB, CINCLANT, 251217Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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cooperation was likely to leave a much more lasting impression. The U.S. therefore went to considerable effort to gain active Latin American support on two fronts, the use of facilities and the actual contribution of forces to the quarantine operations.

[All offers were accepted, not only to avoid giving offense through refusal, but to establish the pattern of inter-American military cooperation.]

The Use of Facilities

323. [There was no shortage of offers of help, primarily in the form of port and airfield facilities for use of quarantine forces. By the end of the 25th, eight Latin American states had offered help.¹ In fact, a problem soon arose in the handling and exploiting of these offers. It became apparent that the offers alone were not sufficient to permit U.S. utilization, but that each required negotiation of some sort. The State Department abdicated any role in this negotiation to CINCLANT and CINCARIB. On October 29, the State Department took note of the definite requirements stated by CINCLANT in connection with the quarantine for the use of aircraft staging, diversion, search and rescue fields, and ports for ship emergencies in Caribbean countries, especially Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Honduras. State informed CINCARIB and CINCLANT that it had already told DoD that offers of assistance received from the four governments in question were of such a character that specific detailed kinds of requirements could be taken up through military channels, Ambassadors being kept informed. This same guidance was to be valid if similar rights were sought elsewhere in the Caribbean -- Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama.²]

¹ J-3 Cuba SITREP 4-62, 260400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.
² Message from Secretary of State to CINCARIB, CINCLANT, 292125Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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324. CINCLANT was authorized on October 30, 1962 to open military level consultations with Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Jamaica,¹ and on the following day with Guatemala and El Salvador.² While the President of Costa Rica had offered the use of facilities, such an action required the formal approval of her legislature, and it was decided to avoid creating possible political and legal complications for the Costa Rican Government by not requesting any specific rights at that time.³

325. CINCARIB had responded to the Department of State message of the 29th by requesting CINCLANT to advise him of requirements for facilities rights, for which he, CINCARIB, would act as military contact in the area.⁴ It was not until November 6 that CINCLANT requested him to open military level consultations with Guatemala and Nicaragua in regard to free entry and use of Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, and Puerto Cabazas, Nicaragua. Even though there was no immediate need for the ports, rights for their use were desired.⁵

326. In some cases CINCLANT dealt with the senior U.S. military officer at the Embassy in the particular country, as in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. While in others, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, CINCARIB acted as CINCLANT's representative in dealing directly with the local military.

327. Some of the officers' port and airfield facility use were not restricted to quarantine use. This was the case with Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala,

1 JCS Message 7103 to CINCLANT, 300414Z, October 1962, SECRET

2 JCS Message 7144 to CINCLANT, 312216Z, October 1962, SECRET.

3 JCS Message 7119 to CINCLANT, 302154Z, October 1962, SECRET.

4 Message CINCARIB to CINCLANT, 302250Z, October 1962, SECRET.

5 Message CINCLANT to CINCARIB, 052000Z, November 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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and Haiti. This was considered especially useful, and efforts were made to give at least token use to these facilities during the period of operations. As late as November 17, U.S. naval forces were being urged to take advantage of the Haitian and Dominican blanket offer as soon as possible, in order to establish a pattern of use in emergency and thus avoid negotiations and minimize need for discussion. ¹

Latin American Naval Contributions

320. Four Latin American countries officially offered forces for the quarantine and three of them actually deployed units. These were Argentina, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala, a quartet which came as some surprise in view of earlier U.S. predictions on contributions. In the case of a number of other countries -- Ecuador, Uruguay, Peru, Colombia, and Chile -- the respective naval commanders offered U.S. Embassy personnel the services of their navies, subject, of course, to governmental approval. For their own reasons, these latter governments dragged their feet and avoided a commitment until the crisis had passed.

320. The U.S., for its part, had early begun to plan for the employment of such Latin American naval forces as were offered. On October 25, CINCLANTFLT authorized COMSOLANT to establish a combined Latin American-U.S. force to serve under the Commander Quarantine Force. ² On the 30th, JINCLANT, by planning directive, formally established the force, to be known as Combined Task Force 137, and to be headquartered at the Naval Station, Chaguaramas,

Message CINCLANTFLT to COMNAVIE SCAFIQ, 170100Z, November 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

Message CINCLANTFLT to COMSOLANT, 231134Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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Trinidad.¹ At the same time CINCLANT announced his intention to assume direct command of the Latin American forces made available, and he directed CINCLANTFLT to chop COMSOLANT to CINCLANT's operational control. COMSOLANT would be the direct commander of the combined task force under CINCLANT.² This was obviously a recognition of the political value of these Latin forces, and by maintaining operational control at the Unified Command level, CINCLANT was indicating his intention to avoid any untoward incidents at lower command levels which might in any way damage that political value. LIAS

330. Combined Task Force 137 was officially activated for operations on November 13.³ The quarantine was ended on November 20 and the Latin American ships returned to their national operational control the first week in December.

331. The operational and command and control aspects of the use of Latin American forces are more fully spelled out in the chapter on the Naval quarantine.

332. Both the acceptance of each offer and the utilization of the units involved had special sets of problems, political and logistic. In the case of the Argentine offer, the two destroyers were offered unofficially the day after the President's address, and on the following day the Argentine government officially offered two destroyers, one submarine, and a marine battalion with 1,100. The view of the senior Argentine officers accorded perfectly with American ones, since they viewed their national

Message CINCLANT to CINCLANTFLT, 302312Z, October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

2. Message CINCLANT to CINCLANTFLT, 302324Z, October 1962, SECRET

3. J-3 Supplementary SITREP 23-52, 140900Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

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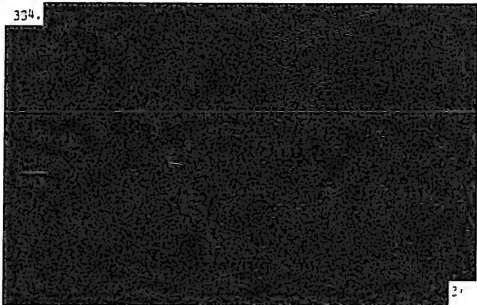
contribution as small in size but important in its symbolic value.¹ The destroyers would be ready for sea in three days and the submarine sooner. However, at U.S. suggestion, the submarine and marine battalion were put on a standby basis only.

333. On November 3 COMSOLANT was informed that the two destroyers were proceeding for quarantine duty under his operational control, but were limited to operations between 10° and 20° north latitude.



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334.



335. The problem was recognized by COMSOLANT on the same day when he reported to CINCLANTFLT that he could accommodate the two Argentine aircraft at the CTF 137 headquarters base at Chaguareras but that he feared basing the Argentine Navy and Air Force at the same facility might present complications.⁴

¹Message ALUSNA Buenos Aires to CNO, 241415Z, October 1962, SECRET.

²Message CNO to COMSOLANT, 031855Z, November 1962, SECRET.

³Message American Embassy, Buenos Aires, to OSD, 022325Z, November, SECRET.

⁴Message COMSOLANT to CINCLANTFLT, 020520Z, October 1962, SECRET.

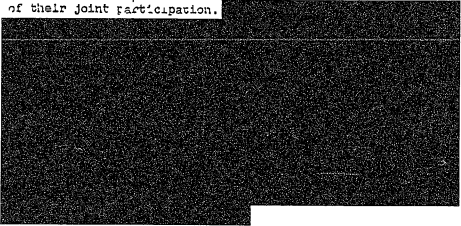
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135. The matter was apparently solved by basing the Argentine aircraft at MacDill AFB instead, where both were in place with crews by November 6, operating under CINCPACFLT.¹

137. The Venezuelan Navy on October 25 offered four destroyers, available on four-hour basis, and a submarine, with other destroyers available but of dubious value.² The U.S. accepted two destroyers and recommended that the submarine be employed in giving COMSOLANT forces ASW training rather than in quarantine operations.³ The ships were to be ready for sea on November 2, but had already reported to COMSOLANT on October 30 for planning purposes. /

133. Presumably for reasons of internal security, no public announcement was made in Venezuela, and somehow it was decided a joint Colombian-Venezuelan announcement would be made of their joint participation.



¹Phone call to Navy Flag Plot, C5030Z, November 1962
²See 1st Log.

³Message from ALUSNA, Caracas, to DHI, 251815Z, October 1962, SECRET.

⁴Message from CNO to ALUSNA, 281307Z, October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

⁵Message from ALUSNA, Bogota to CNO, 032140Z, November 1962, SECRET.

⁶Message from CNO to ALUSNA, Bogota, 031015Z, November 1962, SECRET.

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330. The Venezuelan destroyers arrived at Trinidad on the 9th and 10th of November and commenced their patrol duties on the 12th. Venezuelan Air Force aircraft were directed to fly logistics for the naval units and to conduct reconnaissance under the Venezuelan CNO. } 11

340. The Dominican Republic offered two patrol frigates on October 25, for use on a rotational basis. This represented an ambitious program and the U.S. Military Group in Santo Domingo recognized the problems inherent in it. The ships both had defective evaporators which needed replacement before the ships could become part of regular U.S. patrol-type operations. It also was unlikely that patrol could be maintained more than two weeks because of ship condition and lack of fuel. In order to secure Dominican friendship and to raise the prestige of the Dominican Navy, these U.S. representatives even suggested the U.S. lend the Dominican Republic three one-hundred-foot Coast Guard type vessels for purposes of quarantine participation.¹ However, instead, the U.S. offered to supply parts and fuel.

341. The two destroyers reported to CONSOLANT on November 4, and CONSOLANT was instructed not to utilize them on stations farther than Mona Passage (the body of water between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) nor to keep them out longer than eight days per ship.² The Dominican ships put into San Juan, Puerto Rico, for repair of their evaporators and were ready for sea by November 14.

¹Message from COMUSMILGP, Santo Domingo, to COMUSMACV, 262117Z, October 1962. CONFIDENTIAL.

²Message from CINCLANT to COMSOLANT, 031330Z, November 1962, SECRET.

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342. The only other Latin American naval unit offered was a frigate which Guatemala offered on November 18, to be ready for sea December 7. The quarantine ended before the politically desirable acceptance could be arranged.¹¹

343. The greatest of the Caribbean states, Mexico, declined to send forces to the quarantine operation, but reaffirmed complete cooperation with U.S. efforts, closing her ports to Cuban traffic and setting a ten-ship surveillance patrol in the Yucatan Channel.

344. One final aspect of U.S.-Latin American military cooperation remains to be mentioned. Apparently the measure of success that the U.S. actually achieved in getting Latin American cooperation led to even more expansive hopes. Early in the crisis the concept developed of using Latin American forces in OPLAN 316. This represented such an unlikely possibility that it would be useful to know how it got started.

345. The earliest reference found by the author was in a message from U.S. COMARG/CINCAPLANT to the CG Antilles Command (ANTCOM) on November 7, stating that planning for the possible use of Latin American forces in OPLAN 316 had been initiated. Three basic assumptions were to govern planning. These were that Latin American army forces would not be committed in the initial phase of 316 but in subsequent phases, that the staging of these forces would be through ANTCOM; that these forces would need assistance in

¹¹Message from CINCLANT to COMSOLANT, 182338Z, November 1962.

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[the matter of equipment prior to commitment of U.S. troops.¹ ANTCOM, it might be noted, was transferred from CINCARIB to the operational control of CINCLANT during the crisis shortly after the dispatch of this message.]

343. The next indication came ten days later with CINCLANT's proposed OPLAN 322-62, directing organization of a task force incorporating Latin American participation.

347. CINCLANT stressed the immense political and psychological value of such forces, no matter in what size units they were involved. His OPLAN provided guidance for the organization and employment of the task force.² However, nothing further developed before the ending of the quarantine.]

D. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

343. There have been two focal points in this chapter. These concern the ways in which the U.S. coordinated its policy decisions with its allies on the one hand, and with its pertinent overseas unified commanders on the other. The objective of the first effort was to gain the political and military support of our Allies, that of the second, to reconcile the demands of a local contingency situation with global strategic requirements, specifically with requirements in areas potentially threatened as a result of that contingency.

345. The first objective involved primarily the informing of our allies as to our intentions and goals, in order to assure their cooperation in quarantine operations and their political support in the U.N. arena. The other facet of this object's

¹Message from USCOMAR, CINCLANT to CG ANTCOM-CINCARIB, 070043Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET

²Message from CINCLANT to JCS, CINCLANT, CINCPACFLT, CINCLANTFLT, 172052Z, November 1962, SECRET.

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involved our persuasion of the Allies to join with us in maximizing the deterrent posture we presented to the Soviet Union, thus reducing the likelihood of a potentially dangerous Soviet riposte. The expression "Soviet Union" should really be broadened to that of "Communists" generally, since our hope, if not expectation, in Latin America was that by an apparent readiness to assist Latin American Governments in suppressing uprisings, the instigators of such uprisings might be deterred from starting them. By presenting a common posture of readiness, it was felt that there would be a much greater chance of keeping the Cuban situation local. It remains true, nevertheless, that the inability of the Soviets to make a direct riposte in Latin America meant that Europe remained the key area in the deterrent role.

350. In regard to Latin America, however, we pursued as a positive subobjective actual contributions to the operations against Cuba, both for the purpose of establishing a pattern of inter-American military cooperation in time of crisis and as a means of reducing the drain on the U.S. forces.

351. Our pursuit of the first above-mentioned objective was largely a matter of contending with and attempting to repair late Allied reactions. There was no one set of these. There were distinctly European and Latin American reactions, previous attitudes, initial reactions and subsequent reactions. Previous attitudes toward U.S. Cuban policy ran from quite cool in most of Europe to enthusiastic in parts of Latin America. Initial reactions to the U.S. move likewise ran from horror in parts of Europe to rejoicing in some Latin

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American states. Subsequent reactions, after release of photographic evidence of the missiles and especially after the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw them, were a combination of respect for the U.S. and a marked relaxation of tension, even though the crisis was far from over on October 28.

352. U.S. policy during the week of October 15-22 was made with an eye to manipulating these already existing attitudes. The nature of the policy which emerged was restrained and offered the Soviets and Cubans a way out in view of the evidence the U.S. presented, it became difficult to take exception to the U.S. policy. Furthermore, while public opinion varied in regard to the U.S. move, Allied Governments all declared their official support. Had the U.S. opened with an attack on Cuba, it seems clear that Allied Governments would have been subject to tremendous pressure to disown the U.S. move. B1175

353. In view of the character of the American move, the restrained use of force coupled with maximum political pressure, Allied political support was an essential ingredient for the success of that policy. That support was achieved. Yet one may wonder whether it was achieved because the Allied Governments fully believed in the U.S. position or because they feared the consequences of appearing disunited at a possibly critical moment. D1A5

354. Regarding the second part of the U.S. objective, persuasion of the Allies, primarily NATO, to adopt certain measures to maximize the overall deterrent posture, the U.S. had little success. It would appear that this was basically a matter of differing threat perception. Since USINCEUR

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himself apparently did not consider a Soviet riposte in Europe as likely, it was hardly to be expected that the NATO countries would. There was also very likely an attitude of resistance to being pushed into military alerts as a result of a unilateral act on the part of the U.S. The value of clear political support for the U.S. was one thing; military response by the Allies quite another. The Europeans seem to have recognized that maintenance of political unity with the U.S. would help dampen down the crisis and thus alleviate the need for any military moves by NATO. 1115

355. In summary, the U.S. achieved the political support it wished from Europe, but there was really no united action.

356. In Latin America, we achieved political support and a good deal of military support. However, again there was really no united action. States moved and responded individually. The military support was actually of far greater political value than military, coming, as most of it did, when the need had already passed.

357. As to the second focal point of this chapter, the coordination with U.S. overseas Unified Commands, this was primarily a military problem, handled by the JCS, just as the first problem was primarily a political one, handled by the White House and the Department of State. Each problem, of course, contained strong elements of the other. CINCEUR and CINCPAC both played a role in dealing with Allied states in pursuit of U.S. objectives.

358. The problem of timing was the first to arise in this regard, in connection with the alerting of the Unified Commanders. The need for secrecy was the basis of the problem here. Inadequacy of information on the developing situation

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left the CINCS little time to coordinate their own plans in the event of a prompt Communist move against their plans or to consider alternatives compelled by last minute revisions in their own contingency plans.

359. It was curious that this should occur, since one of the unique characteristics of the Cuban crisis was the fact that the U.S. held the initiative, unlike other crises in which the U.S. has found it necessary to respond to a situation in which the other side provoked and in which the initiative lay with our potential enemy. There was a week in which to coordinate an overall military-political effort instead of hours, as in most other crises. Nevertheless, in the end there was not much more opportunity to coordinate the national effort than in previous cases. The main reason, of course, was the absolutely critical need of preventing a leak which might have allowed the Soviets to demolish the entire U.S. project before it was even launched.¹

350. Closely related to the problem of timing in the starting of the two most concerned CINCS was the dilemma posed by the US-UK-NAO relationship. This question of how one member of an Alliance with forces committed to NATO can coordinate those forces with the rest of his national forces in meeting a local contingency situation outside the Alliance theater was now resolved in the Cuban crisis. US-UK-NAO was granted discretionary power and produced an ad hoc solution.

¹This sensitivity lasted until the very final hours before the President's address. A message went from the JCS to all CINCS (JCS 6850) at 221655Z, October, to the effect that information had just been received that Khrushchev may be about to make an important statement possibly bearing on the Cuban situation, and that the President was considering release of a brief statement on the subject prior to his speech at 222300Z (msg. CONFIDENTIAL). There was considerable relaxation when it was learned that Khrushchev would merely speak at Gromyko's arrival at Moscow airport.

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361. The second major problem involved in coordinating U.S. overseas Unified Commands had its roots in the inadequacy of resources. Both in Europe and the Caribbean additive forces were felt to be needed in order to meet potential developments. Yet OPLANs 312-315 would have absorbed nearly all available regular or quickly mobilizable reserve forces. In both cases lack of the augmentation forces would have seriously hampered contingency plans predicated upon the presumption of their presence. CINCARIB was repeatedly warned to be prepared for single or multiple calls for help, yet steps to augment his force did not even reach the planning stage until the crisis was under way. We were committed to the defense of friendly governments whose support in our policy was sought, yet the means available to do so were extremely thin.

362. In total, the crisis sharply demonstrated the critical interrelationship of military and political factors in national command and control. Political considerations arising from the attitudes of Allies placed restraints upon the military freedom of action of the U.S. We could to some degree influence these attitudes and estimates of the situation, but we could not totally transform them. Such variance is a constant in any alliance of powers with worldwide interests.

363. On the other hand, U.S. national security interests were considered so vitally involved that the U.S. was willing to prepare and launch its move without informing its Allies until the very last minute. No approval was sought. Thus the U.S. showed the limits to political considerations which military necessity can impose.

364. Cuba also illustrated the pressures on command and control created by a contingency situation with possible ramifications

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elsewhere in the world. In short, the U.S. was faced with three possible contingency situations -- Cuba, Europe, Latin America. The last posed the possibility of further multiplication of individual situations. It is highly instructive to contemplate how the U.S. might have responded to trouble in these areas had the attack on Cuba actually been launched.

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V. IMPLEMENTING THE MILITARY COURSE OF ACTION:
THE FIRST PHASE

A. GENERAL PATTERN OF THE MILITARY MOVES

355. The period of national decision making, which ran from October 15 to the 20th, was not accompanied by major military deployments. In fact, the formal JCS warning to the CINCS was not sent until 1814Z on October 21. However, as the decision-making week drew to its close, certain steps were put into effect. The phasing of these was based upon urgency and the degree of danger of specific Cuban counteraction. With the President's address to the nation on the 22nd, all military activity became overt and went into high gear.

356. By the time Premier Khrushchev agreed to dismantle the missile bases, early Sunday morning, October 28th, nearly all the required U.S. moves had been accomplished to fulfill the several missions. The Soviet concession brought a sharp reduction in tension, but U.S. military preparations continued until the very end of the crisis. Nevertheless, the 28th represents a definite watershed, and has therefore been chosen as the terminal point of the "first phase" of the crisis. Continuing deployments thereafter are covered in a later section of this study.

357. Intelligence and reconnaissance activities are not described. They were constant during this week, but because the necessary data were not made available, their existence will only be recognized. The chapter concentrates only on the

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deployments undertaken to support the President's program of action. However, the chief naval activity, the quarantine, is the subject of a separate chapter.

363. Emphasis herein is on the nature of the higher level problems encountered during the deployments, rather than on any great wealth of detail, and on how these concerned or were dealt with by the JCS. A great many other problems on lower levels of command, highly interesting and instructive in terms of command and control, must necessarily be ignored.

B. REALVING AND DEPLOYMENT OF CONTINGENCY FORCES

369. The military contingencies faced in Cuban operations were limited blockade, selective air strikes, land, sea, and air defense of Guantanamo and of the southeastern portion of the United States, invasion of Cuba, and preparation for general war. With the exception of the requirements for invasion, these contingencies had all been provided for by the time the Soviet concession came about.

370. The military concept designed to achieve the U.S. objective of removal of the Soviet missiles and prevention of further introduction of such weapons was based upon the establishment of a quarantine, employing U.S. naval forces primarily. The concept for an air quarantine was also under development but was never fully implemented. It was also hoped at the outset that OAS forces would be able to make useful contributions, but these did not materialize until the crisis was almost over. Concurrently, with the blockade, U.S. military forces worldwide progressively would be

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brought to increased readiness conditions from which prompt and appropriate action could be taken to respond to any aggressive move on the part of Cuba or any member of the Soviet Bloc.

371. Much was accomplished prior to the President's address, but the only actual overt deployment undertaken before the 22nd was to improve the defense of the southeast U.S. Overt action for all other contingencies did not begin until "P" Day. This fact reflected not only the requirement for maximum security to prevent a leak which could have destroyed the effectiveness of the U.S. surprise move, but also the priorities for action which the JCS felt were dictated by the threat.

372. The most likely and simplest Cuban form of response to the U.S. quarantine would be some action against the naval base at Guantanamo. The degree of the Cuban reaction could not be estimated, so it was deemed wisest to prepare for the maximum danger. Should an actual clash between U.S. and Cuban forces occur, either near the naval base or in the air, it was possible that the Cubans might be goaded into attempted raids against the southeast U.S. with their MIG force and such of their IL-28's as were operational. To have attempted this early, before there had been any major military clash, would seem to have been suicidal for the Cubans. On the other hand, it was recognized that their capability to do so was greatest at the outset of the crisis. If they were to wait, they would be caught in the OPLAN 312 strikes which would have very shortly reduced Cuban air capability to zero. Therefore, wisdom also dictated the early strengthening of the air defenses of the southeastern U.S.

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373. Thus the first two U.S. deployments were defensive in nature. Simultaneously with the second of these came the infiltration into Florida bases of a large number of TAC airplanes in readiness for execution of OPLAN 312. Accompanying this deployment was the move of naval carrier task forces to positions off Cuba from which they could support the defense of Guantanamo and participate in OPLANS 312-316.

374. Preparations for the invasion of Cuba under OPLANS 314-316 moved comparatively slowly, so that little progress had been made toward that end by the close of the first phase. It must be recognized, however, that many of the required deployments here were not to be made until a definite "D" Day had been set. Marine forces assigned were mostly deployed or in the process of moving to assigned assembly areas by the 28th, while Army forces never did reach such a state of preparation.

375. Preparations for general war, both offensive and defensive, moved with speed and effectiveness on the part of SAC, CONAD, and naval strategic forces. All strategic forces were at maximum readiness before the first phase closed.

376. A variety of problems arose during this period, some fairly routine, others unique. As might be expected, most of the problems occurred early in the crisis. The hectic tempo fell off fairly soon, and by the morning of the 25th the Battle Staff could report to the CJCS that the previous twenty-four hours, and especially the last twelve, had been significant because of the "slowdown" of Battle Staff activity. In all areas things were reported as having

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fallen into place and were becoming routine. Movements were generally on schedule as plans were rapidly changed into realities. Both the Army and the Marines had given a negative report in response to the last Battle Staff queries on significant problems or developments.¹

377. This report will examine the deployments in support of each contingency category.

The Defense of Guantanamo Naval Base

378. The Base Defense Force at Guantanamo, when the crisis began, was obviously inadequate to defend a large area against overwhelming odds for any length of time, especially since the base was surrounded by prepared Cuban positions. The airfield particularly was vulnerable to fire from dominating terrain features. Furthermore, water supply sources were in Cuban hands outside the Base perimeter.

379. COPLANS 314-316 viewed Guantanamo as a useful springboard for operations by reinforced U.S. forces against Cuban forces in the eastern half of the island. 2 Despite its vulnerability, the maintenance of the base was obviously of prime importance. The first step was taken by the JCS on the 18th when it ordered CINCPAC to chop in place one reinforced infantry battalion from the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (5th MEB) of the 1st Marine Division (stationed at Camp Pendleton near San Diego, California) to CINCLANT. CINCLANT would direct the movement to destination and phasing of the movements as necessary.²

¹ Briefing for the CJCS, 0800 EDT, 25 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

² Message JCS 6764 to CINCPAC, 102343Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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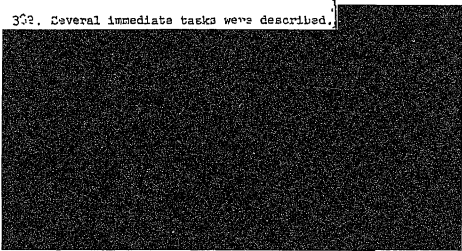
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380. On the 19th CINCLANT requested the Commandant, Marine Corps, to move the reinforced infantry battalion to Guantanamo as quickly as possible in phased tactical group arrivals at the Base. The unit was to be chopped to CINCLANT and further chopped to CINCLANTFLT and the CC FMFLANT.¹ This force was in place at the Base by the next day.

381. The concept for the defense of Guantanamo was spelled out on the 20th in a message from CINCLANT to his subordinate commanders, giving details of Change Number 2 to OPLAN 312-62, Annex L (the Defense of Guantanamo). The plan pointed out that defense of the Base was related to the air strikes provided for in OPLAN 312 in two ways. Execution of the basic plan would most likely cause Cuban attacks on the Base, or, on the other hand, Cuban attacks on the Base would be the occasion for executing the basic plan.

382. Several immediate tasks were described.



383. [As further reinforcements, the Plan Change presumed available the 5th MEB (-1 battalion) and another reinforced Marine infantry battalion.]

¹Message CINCLANT to CMC, CINCPAC, 190618Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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384. In the event of preemptive air strikes against Cuba, it was anticipated in the Plan that all or part of the reinforcements would be deployed to the Base prior to the commencement of operations. The only limitation would be the necessity to preserve surprise.

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385. The overall defense of the Base was assigned as a responsibility of the Commander of the Antilles Defense Command (COMANTDEFCON).¹

387. The further reinforcements were ordered up on the 21st when the JCS directed CINCLANT to transfer one Marine battalion from Camp Lejeune to Guantanamo in time for the first elements to arrive that same night and the last elements to close by the following evening, October 22. CINCLANT was further directed to land the afloat Marine battalion from the Carib PHIBRON on the afternoon of the 22nd. In both cases, warning having been received, the reaction times were much reduced from the requirements given above.

388. CINCLANT requested a change in the JCS orders in regard to the off-loading of the afloat battalion from the PHIBRON. Apparently the plan for the deployment of the

¹Message CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT, COMANTDEFCON, 202034Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War reproduces a comprehensive collection of records from the archives of the three key governments involved in the most dangerous confrontation of the Cold war. Declassified records from the United States, Russia and Cuba significantly advance analysis of the historical foundations of the missile crisis, the policy calculations and considerations of President John F. Kennedy and premiers Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro, and the overt and covert military and paramilitary operations that combined to bring the world to the threshold of a nuclear exchange. Topics extensively covered in the documentation include the failed U.S.-led invasion at the Bay of Pigs, renewed attempts to overthrow Castro through Operation Mongoose and Operation Northwoods, U.S. military contingency planning for conflict with Cuba, naval warfare, Soviet and Cuban decision making and communications during the crisis, and the repercussions for U.S.-Soviet relations, and Soviet-Cuban relations in its aftermath. Materials were identified, obtained, assembled and indexed by the National Security Archive, a non-profit Washington D.C. based research institute and library. The microfiche collection is accompanied by a printed guide and index.

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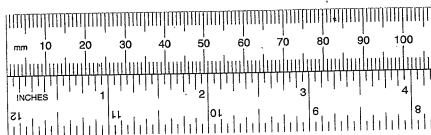
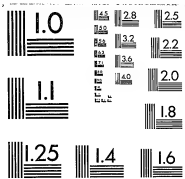
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ground force reinforcements made it desirable to get the PHIBRON battalion ashore at the time of its scheduled arrival at 0800 on the morning of the 22nd, instead of waiting until the afternoon.¹ This request was granted by the JCS a few hours before the battalion arrived.²

389. Evacuation of dependents and noncombatants from the Base was ordered in accordance with plans, with embarkation Monday and sailing when loaded, and the last ship to clear Guantanamo no later than 1800 hours that same day.³ The Commander Caribbean Sea Frontier (COMCARIBSEAFRON) was to provide air and surface escort for the evacuation ships and air escort for aircraft carrying out dependents until well clear of Cuba. Evacuation ships were to proceed at best speed on a track to keep as clear of Cuba as possible.⁴

390 The evacuation went very smoothly, the evacuees being given extremely short notice in order to maintain security almost until the last minute. A total of 2810 persons was evacuated aboard six aircraft and four ships, the last ship clearing the Base at 1730 hours (22 October) and the last aircraft half an hour later.⁵

391. One additional element of reinforcement to the Naval Base was a HAWK battery from the 3rd Light Antiaircraft Missile (LAAN) Battalion to improve low-altitude defense capabilities. The JCS had instructed the Marine Corps on the 19th, on CINCLANT's suggestion, to designate this Battalion for temporary deployment from PACOM to LANTCOM. Its initial destination was Cherry Point,⁶ and after its

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 220750Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS 6846 msg to CINCLANT, 221029Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message JCS 6827 to CINCLANT, 211639Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message CINCLANTFLT to COMCARIBSEAFRON, 220016Z, October 1962, SECRET.

⁵Message COMNAVBASE GIMO to COMCARIBSEAFRON, 222131Z.

⁶Message JCS 6780 to CNO, CMC, CINCLANT, CINCPAC, 191726Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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arrival there, CINCLANT decided to send one battery on to Guantanamo by Marine aircraft, commencing October 26.¹

392. [The reason for this additional air defense deployment may lie in a rather curious message from CINCLANT to CINCLANTFLT on the 24th to the effect that in the event OPLAN 312 were not directed, but Cuba attacked Guantanamo, CINCLANTFLT would be directed to provide air support to COMANTDEFCON for the defense of the Base.² The thought is directly contrary to the planning presumption that any attack on the Base would provoke execution of OPLAN 312, as spelled out in CINCLANT's message to CINCLANT and COMANTDEFCON on the 20th.]

393. A similar disparity appears between this CINCLANT presumption and the original JCS blockade of Cuba order.³ This order stated that establishment of the blockade might lead to Cuban attack on the Base or on planes and ships entering or leaving. Any attacks against the Base or ships or aircraft approaching or leaving were to be repulsed with offensive action "against the attacking planes or ships or ground installations." However, a major constraint on the Base Commander and CINCLANT was built in by the next statement to the effect that "only in the event that it is absolutely necessary in order to protect U.S. lives will U.S. forces be authorized to attack the bases from which the aircraft or ships are operating." The order of magnitude of those U.S. casualties which might have to be suffered before such authorization was given was not indicated.

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 250302Z, October 1962, SECRET.

²Message CINCLANT to CINCLANTFLT, 241632Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

³Message JCS 6846 to CINCLANT, 221111Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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394. This order was itself amended by the JCS on 230009Z to read "...will U.S. forces be authorized by the JCS to attack ...," thereby further tightening control. The lack of precision in regard to operational responsibility was compounded by a further message, presumably designed to clarify the situation, from the JCS to CINCLANT on the 23rd. This transmitted a message from the Secretary of Defense to the Commander at Guantanamo; that the Secretary wished it to be understood that the blockade of Cuba order as modified by the amendment, gave the Commander Guantanamo "clear authority to respond instantly to attack by Cuban forces."¹

395. However, the last mentioned message had barely been sent before the JCS again seemed to change its mind or its emphasis. In a message three hours later the JCS told CINCLANT to delegate authority, previously reserved to themselves, to COMNAVBASE GIMO to order strikes against bases from which Cuban attacks on Guantanamo had been launched.² This was certainly a major extension of the Base Commander's authority, but the authority clearly had to be kept within the context of the obvious JCS intent to control U.S. responses, as evidenced in the body of previous messages. The full extent of the Base Commander's authority was still not spelled out. The maintenance of ultimate control in Washington was further implied by the establishment around this time of a direct communication link between the White House and the Naval Base.

396. Above all, neither these messages nor the blockade of Cuba order specified just how large an attack on the Base would be tolerated before U.S. forces from outside the Base would be employed. In short, the fairly clear relationship between the defense of the Naval Base and OPLAN 312, as defined by CINCLANT, was really not so clear in the eyes of the JCS.

¹Message JCS 5912 to CINCLANT, 232053Z, October 1962, SECRET.

²Message JCS 6916 to CINCLANT, 232304Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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397. At any rate, total Base personnel numbered some 5863¹ men by the morning of the 25th, and the HAWK battery that arrived that day further increased the total. The Base remained on a tense alert during the week, but the lack of any obvious hostile moves by Cuban forces encouraged confidence. The water supply was not tampered with nor were Cuban workers at all prevented from entering the Base.

The Air Defense of the Southeastern United States

398. Measures to improve the air defenses in the southeastern corner of the U.S. were among the first U.S. military actions to be taken in the crisis. In fact, as early as October 9 the obviously worsening situation in the Caribbean had led to the deployment by CINCLANTFLT of an F4H interceptor squadron to Key West, where it was choppoed to CINCONAD control for air defense.² However, it was not until the 17th that the JCS directed CINCONAD to take action immediately for the necessary augmentation of the air defenses of the southeastern U.S.³ On the same day, CINCLANTFLT alerted shore-based Navy and Marine fighter squadrons to be ready to augment CONAD forces in the air defense role in that region.⁴

399. CINCONAD then began to organize the build-up of the air defenses. He proposed a series of actions which could be completed by October 20th if approval were given immediately, and which involved the deployment of additional fighter-interceptor squadrons to Patrick, McCoy, Tyndall and Homestead Air Force Bases and Key West Naval Air Station in Florida. He asked also for immediate assistance in the matter of JCS approval of rules of engagement for the support of OPLAN 312, for authority to establish a Military Emergency Zone (MEZ), as proposed by his message of October 5, and for further authority to implement security control of air

¹Briefing to the CJCS, 0800 LDT, October 25, 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCLANT to JCS, 091618Z, October 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

³Message JCS 6731 to CINCONAD, 171408Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message CINCLANT to JCS, 172256Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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traffic in the MEZ. He further requested a 4-battery HAWK battalion for employment at Key West NAS, suggesting that the most readily available Army or Marine unit should be considered.

400. Finally, since his plan proposed moving into the SAC bases in Florida, he requested full SAC support of those deployments.¹

401. The JCS promptly approved most of CINCONAD's proposals for implementation. He was directed: to deploy 14 F-102's to Homestead (for a total there of 18); to deploy 6 F-106's to Patrick (total there 12); that no additional deployments could be made to Tyndall because the base was already saturated; that VF 41 of 12 F4H would remain under his control; that 6 additional RC-121 AEW&C aircraft should go to McCoy; that VFAW 3 Detachment at Key West would be augmented with additional Navy crews. No HAWK unit was to be made available at this time.²

402. SAC immediately offered to provide the necessary facilities at McCoy and Homestead.³

403. Within less than a day, the JCS reversed itself on the matter of the HAWK battalion, and informed CINCONAD that the Army had been ordered to expedite the readiness status of a HAWK battalion at Fort Meade. CINCONAD was authorized to direct the move to Key West at his discretion and to agree upon rules of engagement with CINCLANT.⁴ CINCONAD immediately requested the CG ARADCOM (Ent AFB) to take the necessary action with COMARC for the deployment of the 6th Battalion, 65th Artillery to Key West, to be under CINCONAD operational control upon arrival there.⁵

¹Message CINCONAD to CEA7, CINCSAC, 181800Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6761 to CINCONAD, 182204Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message SAC to CINCONAD, 190135Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message JCS 6779 to CINCONAD, 191723Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁵Message CINCONAD to CG ARADCOM, 200355Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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404. The move took a surprisingly long time and the HAWK battalion was not fully operational at Key West until the night of the 27th.¹

405. Despite the JCS-approved augmentations, doubts persisted about the air defense problem, and on the 19th the JCS asked CINCONAD's judgment regarding the overall adequacy of the air defenses of the southeastern U.S. and of the whole U.S. in the light of the augmentation of the southeast. CINCONAD was asked whether approval should be sought for the call-up and assignment to him of reserve forces interceptor units, and whether these units should be drawn from the Gulf Coast area only or nationwide. The JCS also asked if he had any requests for further improving the air defenses of the southeast which had not yet been considered.²

406. In response, CINCONAD declared he felt the CONAD forces deployed to the southeast were adequate, although radar capability below 500 feet was limited as were communications facilities at Key West. Nor did he think the deployments had appreciably affected overall CONUS defense capability. He recommended the call-up of all Air National Guard (ANG) interceptor units, or, if not possible, of the Gulf Area ANG. He also suggested that the redeployment of some regular interceptor units into ANG bases could be made without degrading the overall air defense posture. Beyond that, he had no further requests for the improvement of air defense measures.³

¹Briefing to CJCS, 2100 EDT October 27, 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6762 to CINCONAD, 191930Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message CINCONAD to JCS, 201722Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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407. CINCLANT at this point recommended another air defense measure, in response to a JCS query of the 19th, namely, the mobilization of the Puerto Rican Air National Guard (PRANG) when the blockade was established. He proposed that the PRANG be placed on a NORAD Type Category I status,¹ and this was so directed by the JCS.²

408. The movement of fighters into Florida brought in 62 additional aircraft for CONAD, raising the total available to CINCONAD under the operational control of the Montgomery Air Defense Sector to 183. Of these, 154 were based in Florida, south of a line Panama City-Jacksonville. Twenty-two aircraft were kept on a five-minute alert, 72 on a fifteen-minute alert. Four to six were maintained on airborne alert patrol around the Florida Peninsula, augmented by five more for the two hours before and after first light.³ During the President's address to the nation at 1900 EDT on the 22nd, 22 interceptors were airborne in the event of some rash act from Cuba during or immediately following the address.⁴

409. Despite the affirmation by CINCONAD on 201722Z that he had no further requests for the improvement of air defense measures, the subject was raised again in a telecon with the JCS late on the 20th, as a result of which CINCONAD was directed to reexamine his air defense plans for the southeast. This time the dam broke, and CINCONAD began to put forward massive requests. The basis of this

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 201734Z October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6893 to CINCLANT, CSAF, 230411Z, October 1962, SECRET.

³Briefing to CJCS, 0800 EDT, 24 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴U.S. USAF Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, prepared by USAF Historical Division Liaison Office, TOP SECRET, Volume 1, page 15.

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JCS assistance upon urging CINCONAD to make new evaluations is unknown, and is doubly curious since most of his requests were from this point on not approved.

410. However, it may be inferred that the basis lay in the ambiguous attitude toward the threat of a Cuban nuclear attack. The Cuban RE threat hardly merited such activity and measures as CINCONAD proposed, and the JCS seem to have thought so, too. However, they kept seeking reassurance and their concern over the concentration of OPLAN 312 aircraft could hardly have arisen from the Cuban RE threat. At the same time, the likelihood of a Cuban nuclear attack as an opening move was judged as extremely low.

411. CINCONAD's first reply to the latest JCS instruction recommended: deployment of 18 F-102's from Webb AFB, Texas, to Homestead, to be in place by 1600 local October 21; 12 F-106's from Selfridge AFB, Michigan, to Patrick, to be in place by 1600 local October 21, the federalizing of 5 ANG units mostly from the Gulf area; that he be given authority to coordinate with the FAA in regard to air traffic control in the southeast; that he needed HAWK units for the defense of Homestead, MacDill, and Patrick and also defense against low-altitude attack on the coastal metropolitan areas.¹ It is interesting to note that this is the first explicit mention of possible Cuban attack on U.S. cities.

412. In reply, the JCS granted only his two aircraft deployment requests.² However, an hour later CINCONAD put forward his requirements for missile units, both HAWK

¹Message CINCONAD to JCS 210400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6633 to CINCONAD, 211920Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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and HERCULES. In addition to the HAWK battalion already assigned him, he asked for eight more battalions to provide adequate high-level defense for Homestead, Patrick and MacDill Air Force Bases, the population contiguous to Homestead (Miami) and MacDill (Tampa/St. Petersburg), and the population at Houston, New Orleans, Mobile, Jacksonville.

413. [If less than eight battalions could be made available, CINCONAD proposed to use whatever units were furnished to protect the three large airbases as a first priority, and to dispose any remaining missile units to provide minimal protection to the population centers. A minimum of three and a half battalions was considered necessary for this reduced-scale effort.]

414. CINCONAD further requested the 2nd Battalion, 52nd Artillery, a MIKE-HERCULES unit currently stationed as a STRAC unit at Fort Bliss, for deployment to the Miami-Homestead area. If this unit could be obtained, it would reduce the eight battalions of HAWK required for the full-scale defense to seven, but would not reduce the three and a half required for the reduced-scale effort.¹

415. A day later CINCONAD followed up these requests with his requirements for low-altitude defense of the areas described in his message of the 21st, asking twelve battalions of 40mm guns. If less than the full amount could be furnished, he proposed using what he received on the same priority basis as the HAWK units requested.²

416. [Apparently a telecon on the 22nd indicated to CINCONAD that his requests for HAWK could not be met, and]

¹Message CINCONAD to JCS, 212022Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCONAD to JCS, 221507Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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[That possibly three HAWK battalions and one of NIKE-HERCULES would be made available to him. He proposed therefore disposing the HERCULES battalion and one Army HAWK battalion to protect Miami-Homestead, while the two Marine HAWK battalions would be deployed by batteries to cover Patrick, MacDill, Houston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Jacksonville. Patrick and MacDill each were to get two batteries, the other locations one each.]

417. The HAWK units available to CINCONAD shrank even more, and a JCS order on the 23rd directed the Army to provide only one HAWK battalion to CINCONAD. CINCSTRIKE was directed to provide one HERCULES battalion, and CINCONAD was told to make the best possible deployment in the Miami-Homestead area.²

418. Some confusion arose over the JCS order in regard to deployment, CINCONAD understanding the JCS message, reinforced by a telecon earlier, as meaning both battalions should be put in the Miami-Homestead area. He proposed instead to place the HERCULES battalion in that area to cover Homestead first and the contiguous population second. The HAWK battalion would be broken up to cover Miami-Homestead, Patrick, and MacDill and its contiguous population. Such a deployment would provide some protection for the principal critical military installations involved, for the population in the Miami-Homestead area, and at least incidental protection for the population contiguous to MacDill.³ These deployments were approved by the JCS the same day.⁴

1 Message CINCONAD to JCS, 222115Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

2 Message JCS 6913 to CINCONAD, CINCSTRIKE, CSA, CNO, CMC, CSAF, 232121Z, October 1962, SECRET.

3 Message CINCONAD to JCS, 240725Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

4 Message JCS 6937 to CINCONAD, 241717Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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419. The SAM problem having been disposed of, the 40mm gun issue took over the role as chief subject of communication. Presumably CINCONAD's request for twelve battalions of AAA AW was found to be grossly in excess of what could be provided. The JCS instructed him to give priority in proposed deployments to Key West and Homestead, and asked his recommendations for disposition of units¹ excess to these priority requirements.

420. An interesting change in priorities appeared at this point. The JCS request to CINCONAD for his estimate of AAA AW requirements had been based upon consideration of both the MIG and IL 28 threat to the southeast. On the 25th, the JCS reported to CINCONAD that they had now the benefit of a report from a representative (this was the Inspector General of the Air Force) sent to Florida to observe the measures taken to improve dispersion and active air defense capabilities in the area. He indicated that the MIG threat was a very marginal one in view of the recently taken air defense steps. On the other hand, the IL 28 threat, both high and low level, which would develop as the IL 28's became operational, had not yet been fully evaluated. Therefore, CINCONAD was asked to reevaluate his AAA AW priority requirements for airfield defense in view of the reduced MIG threat, and to do the same for populated areas² to meet the IL 28 threat when it developed.

421. The only 40mm force being sent was an improvised battery from Fort Bliss to Key West, which the JCS felt would be adequate to cover his Key West requirement. This

¹Message JCS 5928 to CINCONAD, 2-0743Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 5966 to CINCONAD, 252020Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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unit had been ordered from Bliss by COMARC without previous knowledge of the JCS, but the timing was fortunate, and the airlift of the sixteen tracked vehicles with 40mm guns was completed at 260130Z.¹

422. CINCONAD, by the 28th, indicated that his estimated requirements had by now risen to 14½ battalions of 40mm guns, with 8½ battalions to cover Miami-Homestead, Key West, Patrick, MacDill-Tampa, and McCoy-Orlando. The remaining six units would cover Houston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Jacksonville. The request was quite unrealistic, since that number of active units simply didn't exist. It would have required calling up some 9500 reserve personnel to provide these units.² CINCONRAD (sic)³ realized that the 40mm guns would have extremely limited value, and he appreciated the mobilization problem, but still felt the guns would make some contribution to the defense.

423. In connection with the possible IL 28 threat against cities, the JCS on the 24th sought CINCONRAD's (sic)⁴ comments on possible civil defense actions in Florida. He felt the population in the area should have the benefit of an announcement by the President or the Secretary of Defense to the effect that the military build-up was precautionary, and by virtue of it the probability of attack was lessened. He would urge the population to continue a normal life, and suggested increased news coverage be made available. Certainly no drastic steps, such as blackout, or CONELRAD, or evacuation were required.⁵

¹JCS Cuba SITREP 4-62, 260400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²J-3 Master Check List for Cuban Operations, 29 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Apparently a clerical error - the proper designation for the unilateral U.S. command capacity involved should have been "CINCONAD."

⁴Ibid.

⁵Message CINCONRAD (i.e., properly "CINCONAD") to CJCS, 242328Z, October 1962, SECRET.

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424. The problems discussed thus far have all pertained to an aircraft threat. Yet the whole crisis revolved primarily around a missile threat. Meeting this posed a much more severe set of problems which were handled on an ad hoc basis. The nub of the problem lay in the fact that the U.S. had no missile detection and tracking radar coverage for the area of the Caribbean. To meet the possibility, no matter how remote it seemed, that the Cubans might launch missiles against the U.S., HQ USAF was directed to place an FPS-49 BMEWS tracking radar at Moorestown, New Jersey, on 24-hour operation to provide some detection capability. This facility, operated by the Radio Corporation of America, normally was used as a research and development radar under contract to the Air Force Systems Command and as a Spacetrack sensor under operational control of NORAD. It could provide a potential warning of five minutes for an IREM launch from Cuba targeted on Washington.

425. In addition, radar trackers at Laredo, Texas, and Thomasville, Georgia, also were aligned for Cuban missile warning, and Navy picket ships tied into the air defense net for added low-level aircraft cover-¹g.

Other Air Defense Jears

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¹Hq USAF Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, TOP SECRET.

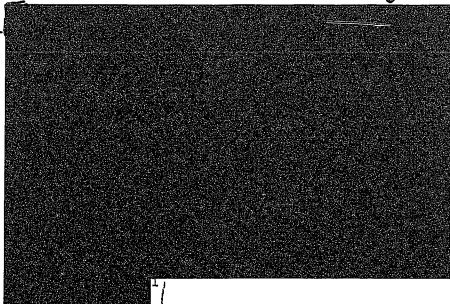
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428. Quite clearly this was one of the points in the crisis, of which there were several, at which the requirements for contingency operations against Cuba tended to clash with the requirements of general war preparation. The JCS position, at least as expressed to CINCONAD, avoided the dilemma rather than seeking to clarify it by a decision.

Message CINCONAD to JCS, 202345Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

Message JCS 7057 to CINCONAD, 280114Z October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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429. Another collateral issue concerned the efforts to establish air traffic control in Florida. On the 20th, CINCLANT urged the JCS to approve his concept of a military emergency zone, as proposed in early August, in the event of operations against Cuba, and to grant him authority to establish it.¹ The JCS, while approving the concept, nevertheless withheld authority to establish the MEZ, on the basis that it was not yet necessary. The Air Force was to coordinate with the FAA for corridor reservations into Florida staging areas, but no implementation was allowed until OPLAN 312 was executed.²

430. It will be recalled that CINCONAD had asked for similar authority on the 18th. It is unclear as to whether these two requests were coordinated, although the respective concepts were fairly similar.

431. Here the JCS faced the dilemma of withholding a vital defensive measure until the last minute in order to avoid worsening the existing crisis. Every precaution was being taken not to provoke the Cubans into a rash act or alarm the Soviets by our preparations.

432. Initial control steps were undertaken, however, and effective 1800 EST 24 October, the FAA restricted the flight of civil aircraft in southern Florida if the aircraft did not have an approved military/PAA flight plan and possessed functioning communications for two-way contact with the air traffic control facilities.³

Deployment of Air Strike Forces

433. The movement of tactical air forces into position for the execution of OPLAN 312-62 was one of the smoothest operations of the crisis. These forces rapidly achieved full readiness posture

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 042300Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6822 to CINCONAD, CINCLANT, CASF, 213610Z, October 1962.

³JCS Cuba SITREP 3-62, 150400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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re remained throughout the crisis prepared to implement all or any of the several missions of OPLAN 312. Their role in this mission was critical and upon their success in eliminating Cuban missile and air capability and in crippling Cuban mobile forces would depend largely on the success of the ground assault. They were to have [redacted] in which to do their job before the assault landings were made. While TAC aircraft crowded into Florida bases, they were joined by Marine attack squadrons meant to support the Marine amphibious assaults. At sea [two] carrier divisions took position off Cuba to support the landings and to aid the defense of Guantanamo.

434 While the actual deployment of aircraft did not begin until the 21st, preparations were under way three days earlier. On the 18th, the JCS granted CINCLANT authority to release special intelligence planning information for use at air crew level, thus permitting pilot briefings and target assignments.¹

435 On that same day, CINCPACFLT began a series of efforts to increase his capability by arranging the return of current TAC commitments in the Pacific, namely the units on Okinawa and in Thailand, the latter sent there as part of the U.S. deployment in May 1962. As a result of the situation in the Caribbean, CINCPACFLT requested CINCLANT's support in getting these forces returned. He emphasized that the [33] F-100's and their crews could be a vital asset to the success of OPLAN 312.² CINCPACFLT similarly requested the return of these units,³ and the case was

¹Message JCS 6715 to CINCLANT, 182356Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCPACFLT to CINCLANT, 121515Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message CINCPACFLT to JCS, 190037Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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backed up by CINCLANT himself.¹ However, either for political reasons concerned with Southeast Asia or for the desire to keep a reserve at hand in PACOM lest the Bloc react to the U.S. initiative in Cuba by a move in Southeast or East Asia, the JCS declined to return the F-100's.

436. CINCLANT's order to his subordinate commanders to move went out at noon on the 21st. He outlined instructions for the deployment of APLANT units to designated employment bases in "an orderly but not mass deployment." Every effort was to be made to discourage indications of a mass build-up. Accordingly, aircraft were to deploy in flights of four only, and in the case of deployments from bases located near cities, deployments were to be no more frequent² than one each hour.

437. Within the next day large numbers of aircraft poured into the five Florida bases, Homestead, Key West, MacDill, McCoy, and Patrick, and Shaw in South Carolina. Most were Air Force TAC planes, but the JCS on the 21st also approved the move from Cherry Point, North Carolina, to Key West of a Marine Air Group.³

438. However, no more had the deployment into southern Florida begun before the JCS began to have second thoughts about the wisdom of such a huge concentration on a few bases, and thus began the major policy problem of the APLANT deployment. This had been foreseen in some quarters at least. The Commander of the 19th Bombing Wing at

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 191456Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCLANT to Subordinate Commanders, 211233Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message JCS 6831 to CINCLANT, 211819Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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stead had indicated to SAC on the 19th that the planned deployment for OPLAN 312 called for a minimum of [238] craft to be based at Homestead.¹

439 Analogies to Pearl Harbor may have appeared uncomfortably real, and consequently the JCS notified CINCLANT around noon on the 22nd that "there was concern" about the heavy concentration at Homestead and Key West. He was authorized to relax his readiness to execute OPLAN 312 from [six to twelve hours] and was asked to consider thinning out attack aircraft at these two bases. In short, the JCS felt the danger of concentration outweighed the [six-hour] advantage which concentration permitted.²

440 CINCLANT called CINCPACFLT to relay this information, and CINCPACFLT's attitude toward the JCS suggestion was quite negative. He pointed out that the move to forward bases had been undertaken as a result of JCS action on the evening of the 25th. At that time the risk of conventional attack against the Florida bases had been appraised, assessed, and accepted. His view of no intelligence since received which would seriously alter this risk of conventional limited attack. As to nuclear attack, the risk may have increased as a result of recent additional intelligence. However, he did not believe anyone thought that the nuclear threat before we attacked was a real one. If it were, he felt we were approaching the whole Cuban operation with the wrong strategy and wrong weapons. He was referring here, it seems certain, to the threat of possible Cuban use of nuclear weapons on the island, rather than strikes launched from the Soviet Union.

¹Message 140n EMB to LMG Homestead to SAC, 191900Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6031 to CINCLANT, 221341Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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441. Consequently, CINAFILANT's position was that any redeployment of some strike forces would seriously jeopardize his ability to deliver a maximum strike at dawn on the 23rd.¹ This strike timing, it should be added, was the one toward which CINAFILANT had been striving in readiness terms ever since the crisis activity started.

442. CINAFILANT fully supported his subordinate air commander's position. He pointed out to the JCS that approved planning for OPLAN 312 execution within [twelve hours] required prepositioning of forces at Homestead and Key West. All nonessential aircraft had been removed from Key West to clear the decks. He agreed completely with CINAFILANT's comments, adding that they applied to all air units involved in OPLAN 312, and that disruption of those forces at this time would seriously affect our ability to deliver coordinated attacks within the required time frame.²

443. This message temporarily stilled the issue, but only temporarily. It was bound to recur as the crisis week advanced and airplanes continued to pour into the bases of the southeast. The build-up and source location can best be illustrated by a table drawn from the JCS Cuba SITREP:

DTG	Numbers of Aircraft	Base
230400Z	111 (362 attack) ⁵	Homestead - 215
240400Z	515 (448 attack)	Key West - 66
250400Z	594 (550 attack) - as of this date	MacMill - 221
260400Z	782 (655 attack)	Shaw - 6
270400Z	(576 attack)	McCoy - 162
		Patrick - 24

¹Message CINAFILANT to JCS, 222150Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINAFILANT to JCS, 222150Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³JCS Cuba SITREPS, October 23-27, 1962, TOP SECRET.

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444. There was always a healthy reserve available over and above what the OPLAN 312 missions called for. As of 0800 on the 28th there were available [573] aircraft to cover the missions requiring [465].¹ In addition, there were the naval aircraft which on the 29th numbered [123] available with [114]² required by the OPLAN.

445. Very early on the 25th the CJCS, presumably armed with the above figures, requested CINCLANT to give an estimate of the impact on the [twelve-hour] readiness status for implementation of OPLAN 312 if forces in the forward areas were reduced by 50 percent.³ CINCLANT, in his reply, referred to the cogent arguments of CINCPACFLT in the earlier exchange of messages on the base vulnerability issue, and stressed that the reduction of vulnerability accruing from dispersal of the force would be far outweighed by the increased cost in manpower and resources and degradation of offensive capability.⁴

446. CINCLANT followed the same line of argument in response the next day to presumably telephoned JCS inquiries as to where redeployed aircraft would go if a 50 percent redeployment from Homestead and Key West were ordered, and how would the OPLAN be affected. The latter question seems superfluous, since CINCLANT had twice already made known his position on it. In reference to the first query, he stated that in most cases the planes would return to their home bases. This would include support equipment personnel, and thus would impose a heavy strain on airlift capability.

¹Briefing to the CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 25, 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Briefing to the CJCS, 0300 EDT, October 23, 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message JCS 6963 to CINCLANT, 250026Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message CINCLANT to JCS, 251000Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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47. CINCLANT added parenthetically that he was taking steps to improve local dispersal at the bases.

48. As to the second query, he remained adamant in his estimate that such a move would heavily influence his ability to launch OPLAN 312. With the removal of essential support equipment as well as the aircraft, CINCLANT would be for all practical purposes returning to the pre-emergency posture.¹

49. This last statement seems somewhat of an exaggeration, since a 50 percent reduction on that day, the 26th, would still leave him [330] attack aircraft on the Florida bases.

50. Despite this firm position, the next day CINCLANT reported to the JCS that he was taking several steps to reduce the concentration. He had ordered AFLANT to reduce the number of Air Force and Marine aircraft by 15 percent by rotation to home stations or other stations. LANTFLT had been directed to relocate one fighter squadron from Key West. These actions would reduce the number of aircraft by approximately [30] at Key West, [34] at MacDill, [27] at Homestead, and [22] at McCoy, for a total reduction of [113]. Furthermore, he was recommending the relocation of [eight] aircraft of a VFWB squadron assigned to CINCONAD from Key West. The basis for this order apparently lay in the [114] plane extra strength [579] total available) over the OPLAN requirement of [465]. However, after CINCLANT's vigorous efforts to maintain maximum strength at hand, it is curious that he should voluntarily accept a reduction.

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 260452Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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51. Maximum local dispersal of the remaining aircraft
is being effected, and CINCLANT did not consider that his
address posture should be further reduced by additional
locations.¹

452. It would appear that these proposals did not meet
JCS approval, they having also asked CINCPAC's views
on CINCLANT's recommendations. The 15 percent reduction
was suspended, apparently on the 28th. It was to be under-
taken thereafter only at JCS direction. Presumably the
suspension was related to the Soviet concession of that
morning.

453. This exchange of messages coincided with the Soviet
concession which ended the first phase of deployments.
One other item of interest may be added in connection
with air strike force deployments. Sometime on the 28th
the naval carrier divisions were [both] withdrawn from the
south of China after submarine locations indicated possibly
increased undersea threat.²

Marshall Islands Assault Forces

454. The account of the assault forces role in the crisis
involves Army and Marine forces. By the close of the
first phase, all Marine forces assigned to OPLANs 314/316
were deployed and at sea. [Most of the Army's activity
involved preparations for deployment rather than actual
movement, so that by the end of the entire crisis only
some 27,000 Army personnel had actually been deployed.]³

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 270250Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Briefing for CJCS, 2100 EDT, October 26, 1962, TOP SECRET.

³The U.S. Army in the Cuban Crisis, prepared in the Office
of the Chief of Military History, TOP SECRET.

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455. In order to understand the purposes of the assault forces' preparations in this period, it is useful to have some comprehension of the nature of OPLAN 316 in its tactical details. Since OPLAN 314 was dropped from consideration on October 24, it will be profitless to concern ourselves with its characteristics.

456. The concept of operations was simple. Airborne forces would seize and hold [REDACTED]. A continued build-up of Army forces would come through [REDACTED] until these forces were strong enough to seize the [REDACTED] and then permit landing of designated surface elements of an Army Task Force through [REDACTED].

457. Simultaneously a Naval Task Force would make an amphibious assault [REDACTED] putting ashore most of the 2nd Marine Division. Other Army forces would also land here through the Marine bridgehead.

Marine Deployments

458. Marine forces moved toward Cuba from both LANTCOM and PACOM. As has been recounted earlier, [two] battalions from LANTCOM and [one] from the 5th MEB in California were landed by sea or air at Guantanamo on the 22nd and 23rd. With two BRT's in Guantanamo and one in the Mediterranean (CINCLANT's suggestion that this be withdrawn for use in Cuban operations was vetoed by the JCS as politically unwise), the 2nd Marine Division had [six] remaining BRT's. PACOM was therefore called upon early to provide further support.

459. The JCS ordered a Marine HAWK battalion from Twenty-Nine Palms, California, to Cherry Point on the 19th.

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for temporary deployment, part of the unit scheduled for duty at Guantanamo.¹ However, this battalion did not close on Cherry Point until the 25th.²

460. The 5th MEB was alerted on the 19th, when the JCS ordered CINCPAC to assemble amphibious shipping in embarkation ports in preparation for possible orders to chop the unit's sea echelon to CINCLANT. However, the Brigade was not to be loaded until the JCS directed.³

461. On the 22nd, the JCS instructed CINCPAC to load the Brigade as soon as possible and to chop the force to the temporary operational control of CINCLANT.⁴ In the meantime, CINCLANT had raised with the JCS the matter of the missing battalion from the 5th MEB, which had been sent to reinforce Guantanamo. This reduced the Brigade to [three] BLT's, while its role in [OPLAN 316] was predicated upon its containing [four] BLT's. CINCLANT suggested the Brigade be reconstituted by the addition of another BLT.⁵ His proposal was accepted by the JCS who instructed CINCPAC to reconstitute the Brigade.⁶ The JCS SITREP for the next morning reports that a new battalion had already been selected.

462. Air support for the Brigade was covered by the instruction to CINCPAC to transfer operational control in place to CINCLANT of [two] CONUS-based Marine attack squadrons earmarked for the 5th MEB.⁷

¹Message JCS 6780 to CNO, CMC, CINCLANT, CINCPAC, 191726Z October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Briefing for the CJCS, 0800 EDT October 25, 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message JCS 6796 to CINCPAC, 192231Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Message JCS 6863 to CINCPAC, 221805Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁵Message CINCLANT to JCS, 222140Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁶Message JCS 6901 to CINCPAC, 231538Z, October 1962, SECRET.

⁷Message JCS 6899 to CINCPAC, 231510Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET

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463. For some reason, the JCS on the 25th modified its order to CINCPAC of the 25th, instructing him to load the 5th MEB as soon as possible and to advise them of the earliest sailing date.¹ Again he was enjoined not to sail the force until directed.¹ Finally the next day sailing orders were sent, and the force was chopped to CINCLANT.² The Brigade of 8500³ men got under way at 27110Z in three increments; its estimated time of arrival at the Canal Zone was November 5th.³ The Brigade was designated as CINCLANT reserve. It was called Landing Group East in CPLAN 316, and was to be ready to land at Guantanamo or wherever else CINCLANT determined.

464. In the meantime Marine forces in the Atlantic were mustering. As of early on the 23rd, one BLT afloat was moving to take up position [redacted] of the island; another BLT from [redacted] was to take up position [redacted] of Guantanamo; a third BLT was proceeding from Norfolk to take up position [redacted]. However, apparently [redacted] there was a change in plans, and it was decided to keep the three BLT's with their amphibious life in an assembly area [redacted] in the Bahamas, where they would be held in readiness for CPLAN 316.⁵

465. As of the next morning, the three BLT's at Elsworth were designated the 4th MEB, with [redacted] more BLT's of the 2nd Marine Division outloading from Moorehead City.⁶ By

¹Message JCS 6544 to CINCPAC, 241022Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6579 to CINCPAC, 251055Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Briefing for the CJCS, 2100 EDT, October 27, 1962, TOP SECRET. This force is listed as 10,500 in the CJCS Briefing of November 1.

⁴JCS Cuba SITREP 1-62, 230400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁵Briefing to the CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 25, 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁶Briefing to the CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 26, 1962, TOP SECRET.

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early on the 29th, all but one of the 2nd Divisions BMT's are afloat, and the last was due to sail that day. Excluding the 5th MEB, the [16,993] Marines of Landing Group West were either near or en route to Cuban waters.¹ In addition, support units of the 2nd Marine Division and of the II Marine Expeditionary Force were being readied. Including combat aviation, artillery and tank units, some [44,117] Marines were preparing.

Army Deployments

466. Probably the major set of problems facing the Army arose out of efforts to improve on movement schedules so as to reduce the time of getting Army forces ashore in Cuba. While the [REDACTED] interval between the opening of OPLAN 312 attacks and the joint air/sea assault remained inflexible, some improvement was seen possible in reduction of closure rates for follow-up forces. The persistent pattern of query from the Secretary of Defense and/or the White House concerning the weight and speed of the assault, which shows up in the message files, clearly indicates the source of the pressure for such reductions.

467. The operational problems derived therefrom were essentially logistical, the same familiar tale of inadequate facilities and shipping.

468. With the changes in OPLAN's 314/316 which occurred up through the crisis itself, the Army's participation therein varied accordingly. By identifying the major Army units in the troop list as it appeared in mid-crisis week, it will be simpler to follow the various Army efforts.

¹Briefing to the CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 29, 1962, TOP SECRET.

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469.

a.

b.

c.

d.

170. The total Army force planned for commitment at the outset of the crisis was therefore [99,200.]

171. The air echelon would deploy directly from its home bases at Forts Bragg, Campbell, and Benning. It would stage from parts of embarkation at the Florida air bases.

172. [The surface echelon would deploy from home stations except for Task Force CHARLIE and one tank battalion which would deploy from Camp Stewart. The floating reserve would]

Deploy from Stewart and Benning, as would most of the on-call reserve. All these units would embark from East or Gulf coast ports.¹

473. These then were the forces which the Army began to marshal.

474. All XI armies had opened emergency operations centers by the 22nd and all units earmarked for OPLAN 316 were ordered to return to their home stations.² As it happened, a number of these units were engaged in exercises when the crisis began. CINCSTRIKE reported to the CJCS on the 20th that Exercise THREE PAIRS had been underway at Fort Hood, Texas, since October 15th, involving the 1st and 2nd Armored Divisions, key elements in OPLAN 316. He had approved withdrawal of tactical air units involved in the exercise and their return to home base, with only a minimum number of sorties arranged for exercise purposes. Several other units not based at Fort Hood were released to CINCSTRIKE for return to home station. CINCSTRIKE was reluctant to cancel the exercise, feeling its continuation would contribute to a higher state of readiness. Furthermore, he was concerned over the possible impact of cancellation on tactical surprise for OPLAN 316.³

475. The JCS requested CINCSTRIKE to release from THREE PAIRS all those Army and Air Force units required in OPLAN 312 and 316, specifically including any Air Force units not yet released and all Army units other than the 2nd Armored Division and whatever elements of the 1st Armored Division

¹"The U.S. Army in the Cuban Crisis," op. cit.

²Message CINCLANT to A10930, 221932Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message CINCSTRIKE to CJCS, 201555Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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were not included in Cuban plans. The exercise was to continue on a reduced basis until October 27 to provide cover¹ for Cuban deployments.

475. CINCPAC was conducting Exercise SHORE LINE at this same time, and he received similar orders concerning² [312/316] units participating in it.

477. [The major Army deployment of a combat unit involved Task Force CHARLIE. This was the composite armored combat command designed to support OPLANs 314/316, totaling 4600 men from the 1st Armored Division. [REDACTED]

Increment [REDACTED]

478. [The JCS directed the loading for movement of Task Force CHARLIE (TFC) by rail from Fort Hood on the 22nd, with destination to be designated later.⁴ Department of the Army's instruction to the CG USCONARC indicated TFC would go either to Fort Stewart or to a Gulf port.⁵

¹Message JCS 6814 to CINCPAC, 210154Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message JCS 6845 to CINCPAC, 220351Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³The U.S. Army in the Cuban Crisis," op. cit.

⁴Message JCS 6869 to CSA, 221833Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁵Message DA to CG USCONARC, 222302Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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479. The concern about getting TFC to a forward base lay in the fact that as late as the 24th, OPLAN 316 did not contemplate the introduction of American armor into the beachheads until [D+3]. In view of the build-up of Cuban capabilities, especially their acquisition of a sizable force of heavy Soviet tanks, this aspect of the OPLANS seemed to be extremely risky. The Chief of Staff of the Army took a personal hand in attempting to improve this situation, insisting that some U.S. armor go ashore on [D-Day]. By moving TFC forward to Fort Stewart, its arrival in the [redacted] beachhead could be significantly speeded up, provided LST's were at the ports of embarkation on time and other transportation arrangements were properly made.

480. [A] change of plans on the 24th called for Increment 1 with its 22 M41 tanks to go ashore on D-Day; the next four increments by D+2; the last increment D+5. This meant 75 of TFC's tanks would be ashore by D+2. The new movement schedule was ready by the 26th and called for TFC's introduction being speeded by one to three days. At the same time the 2/69 Medium Tank Battalion which was to support the Marines at Tarara would also be speeded up, and a portion of the unit's 67 M48 tanks would go ashore on D-Day. This battalion had been ordered from Benning to Stewart on the 24th.]

481. The forward move of TFC was plagued by a number of mishaps and shortages of facilities. The first increment reached Stewart on the 26th but the whole force did not get there until after the first phase of the crisis had

¹The U.S. Army in the Cuban Crisis," op.cit.

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ended. The 3rd and 4th increments were scheduled originally to go to New Orleans, but on the 27th it was proposed they move to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, reducing their movement time to the objective area by 3 days.¹ This was later cancelled.

482. The floating reserve was alerted for movement to Fort Stewart and commenced on the 28th. The on-call reserve forces were alerted for rail loading commencing November 2 for Fort Stewart.²

483. [Another set of problems in the Army deployments concerned the shortage of forward bases. The saturation of bases in southern Florida was recognized as a potential source of trouble, and CINCLANT began early to look for additional bases. He reported to the JCS on the 18th that after a conference with CINCPACFLT and the CG XVIII Airborne Corps, he was convinced of the requirement for Opalocka Airfield, a World War II installation which had been turned over after the war to Dade County. The use of Opalocka, CINCLANT explained, was essential to the execution of OPLAN 316 because of the shifting of the planned use of southern Florida airbases from Army staging bases to the Air Force in order to accommodate the recently expanded requirements of OPLAN 312. Opalocka would be used to stage two Army battle groups for the airborne assault plus supply storage and as a hospital base.]

484. [He stressed that the base was urgently needed to assure completion of OPLAN 316 preceded by OPLAN 312. No other base existed.³ However, two days later nothing had]

¹Briefing to CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 27, 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Briefing to CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 28, 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message CINCLANT to JCS, 161342Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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Apparently yet been done by the JCS, and so CINCLANT queried the JCS as to whether he had their authority to negotiate with Dade County officials for the immediate use of the base. He urged immediate granting of authority so negotiations could begin early on the 22nd, and further asked authority to use a cover story.]

485. [Presumably the authority was granted, since by the afternoon of the 22nd CINCLANT reported that negotiations had been successfully completed with the county officials, authorizing immediate use of Opalooka, and that CINCLANT was already starting to preposition materiel and equipment.² The JCS thereupon immediately authorized the movement of units, at CINCLANT's discretion, into Opalooka.]

486. Similar efforts were launched by CINCLANT on the 21st to get the use of the Key West International Airport, but no results had been achieved before the first phase ended.

487. Shipping problems were crucial in the preparations for the execution of an assault on Cuba, but they must be dealt with only cursorily in this study. The problem was the standard one of time and an inadequate number of the proper type of ships. The change in planning focus with the dropping of OPLAN 314 and its [eighteen-day] reaction time and the substitution of a [seven-day] reaction time meant that all shipping schedules designed to support the [314] plan had to be rescheduled to cover the [new 1-day] plan. Early on the 22nd CINCLANT requested that all planning

¹Message CINCLANT to JCS, 201/280, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCLANT to JCS, 221/382, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message JCS to CINCLANT, 221/430, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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action possible be taken immediately to enable MSTs shipping to be placed in berth in the time required to meet the fast reaction time of [OPLAN 316] and all MSTs ships in Atlantic coast harbors were held for possible [316] use.

488. There was a feverish search for amphibious vessels which were in particularly short supply to carry the Army forces. CINCARIB, faced with possible multiple calls for help from Latin American governments, had his [two] LST's taken from him and given to CINCLANT.¹ Even commercially owned LST's in the Gulf area were considered for chartering. However, most of the activity over shipping came after the first phase when the rather ponderous machine of the assault force began to achieve some readiness status.

489. With the additional requirements for airlift imposed by the reinforcement of the Army air-landed echelon under the revised [OPLAN 316], consideration was given early to the possible call-up of reserve units, especially troop carrier ones. As a result of a verbal directive from the JCS, CINCLANT on the 19th advised his subordinate commanders that they might plan for the mobilization of reserve units, including those employing troop carrier aircraft on D-Day but not before.² The JCS corrected the impression given by CINCLANT's message by further notifying him that as of that time mobilization was approved on D-Day only for reserve units employing troop carrier aircraft.³

¹Message JCS o/c/ to CINCARIB, 192037Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Message CINCLANT to JCS, 190632Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message JCS 6784 to CINCLANT, 192018Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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490. Presumably this restriction to D-Day was part of the security apparatus surrounding Cuban operations, but at all events the decision was made not to wait¹ for D-Day. As of 0900 (local) October 28th, the Air Force directed the call-up of certain reserves, consisting of [eight] troop carrier wings. These totaled:

[21 squadrons of C-119 at 16 aircraft per squadron - 336
3 squadrons of C-123 at 16 aircraft per squadron - 48
6 aerial port squadrons.]

491. It was estimated that [315] C-119 sorties would be required for heavy drop in the parachute assault of D-Day and [53] C-119 sorties for the air-landed elements on D-Day and D-1. [Thirty-five]¹ C-123 sorties were scheduled for air landing on D-Day. The additional [382] aircraft thus would make an invaluable augmentation to follow up airlift operations.

492. In total, then, the forces preparing to assault Cuba at the close of the first phase numbered some [259,000] men. These included the Army and Marine forces described, and a Navy force comprising a striking and covering group with [two] attack carriers, an ASW group, and a submarine group. The rounded manpower totals were:

Total Navy personnel afloat -

Total Army personnel afloat -

Total Marines (including Guantanamo) -

Total Air Force personnel -

[65,000
100,000
44,000
50,000. ²]

C. INTEGRATING GENERAL AIR PREPARATIONS

493. Concurrent with the deployments just described, which were intended solely to deal with the Cuban contingency,

¹ Briefing to the CJCS, OCSO ENT: October 26, 1962, TOP SECRET.

² Briefings to the CJCS, October 26-30, 1962, TOP SECRET.

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U.S. general war forces were readied and marshalled, as part of the overall deterrent posture the U.S. was attempting to present to the Soviet Union. Both offensive and defensive forces deployed with admirable efficiency and no major problems were encountered in either category.

Offensive Preparations

494. General war offensive forces deployed or brought to readiness included SAC, naval strategic forces, and tactical air units assigned to general war missions in the overseas commands. The records available did not provide any data on the readiness process for naval forces, so it must be presumed they reached proper alert status at the assigned times.

495.



495. The next day CINCSAC was directed to initiate the 1/8 airborne alert, beginning immediately and to be in full effect by Tuesday, October 23. The JCS stated that

Message JCS 5432 to CINCSAC, 211925Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.
JCS Cuban SITREP 2-62, 240400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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[This should be done quietly and gradually.
given discretionary powers at the same time

B/A

597.

498. As of 0800 EDT on the 24th, SAC had dispersed 183 B-47's to 33 ZI civilian and military airfields. Of these 180 were operationally ready. As of 1900 local on the 23rd, the 1/8 airborne alert had 57 B-52's airborne; 54 of these with 184 weapons were effectively covering targets.

499. Under the 1/8 airborne alert concept, 66 B-52's was the maximum number that would be airborne at any one time, providing a maximum of 60 effective airplanes with 210 weapons.

500.

1. Message JCS 0607 to CINCSAC, 221647Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.
 2. Message SAC to JCS, 221336Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.
 3. Message JCS 5917 to CINCSAC, 132306Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.
 4. Briefing for the CJCS, 0100 EDT, October 24, 1962, TOP SECRET.
- The USAF Comptology gives a figure of [redacted] as of 0200 EDT on the 24th.

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501. Totals vary considerably as between the several sources checked. The most complete breakdown, in the USAF chronology, shows that at 2300Z on the 27th there were 1336 operationally ready, combat craft (431 B-52, 70 B-58, 748 B-47, 87 RB-47) of which 683 were on alert status. These were backed up by 896 operationally ready tankers (395 KC-135 and 501 KC-97) of which 379 were on alert.

This then was the SAC force ready by the close of the first phase of the crisis.

502.

503. In Europe additional precautions were taken toward the end of the crisis week. On the 26th the Secretary of Defense authorized the CJCS

Briefing for the CJCS, 0800 EDT, October 28, 1962, TOP SECRET.
The USAF chronology lists 1576 aircraft generated.

Briefing for the CJCS, 2100 EDT, October 25, 1962, TOP SECRET.

Message CINCPAC to JCS 220958Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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in Europe.



Defensive Preparations

504. Defensive preparations for general war were taken both by air and sea forces in this period. Concurrent with the measures taken to reinforce the southeastern portion of the U.S. were CINCCNAD measures to raise the alert level of all national air defenses.

505. As a precaution, the JCS authorized CINCCNAD on the evening of the 21st  until such time as the dispersal of the interceptor force was ordered within CONUS.² The dispersal order itself came the following afternoon, the move to be carried out on a very quiet, low key basis.³ The dispersal of the NORAD fighter force was completed during the 23rd, ⁴ [173] aircraft moving to their dispersal sites. ¹

506. Deployment of all fighter-interceptors was completed during the 24th, and by 0800 G. On the 25th the full force was in position. [One-hundred and fifty-four airplanes]

¹ Message JCS 7035 to CINCSOUTH, 271128Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

² Message JCS 6834 to CINCCNAD, 211940Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³ Message JCS 6858 to CINCCNAD, 221630Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴ JCS Cuba SITREP 2-62, 240400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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[were on a five-minute ground alert, 444 were on a fifteen-minute alert, and 446 were on a one- to three-hour alert.]¹

507. Air defense capabilities remained high, CINCONAD reporting at 2000 on 26 October that 94 percent of his fighter forces, 92 percent of the SAMs and 99 percent of surveillance equipment were operationally ready.² Before this time, however there had been a slight decrease in the pressure on CINCONAD's forces nationwide. This was probably the result of the generally sound state of air defenses. In a summary to the CSAF early on the 23rd, CINCONAD stated that the former air defense capability had been only slightly disturbed by the deployments to the southeast, and that, in the light of the present situation, the overall air defense capability had been substantially increased.³

503. The airborne alert manning level was reduced from [ten] interceptors [to four] effective 1145 on 23 October, the new level to be maintained but increased immediately if needed. Additional interceptors would be maintained on strip alert available for immediate scramble and augmentation of the airborne alert force. The reduced level would allow for continuous operations and would conserve the interceptor force for any higher alert level required.⁴

509. The extent and complexity of operational air deployments connected with CONUS defense and SIOP readiness preparations, and the concomitant need for central coordination of the respective activities of the two co-equal CINCs involved,

¹Briefing for CJCS, 0800 EDT October 25, 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Cuba SITREP, 270400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Message CINCONAD to CSAF, 230250Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴JCS Cuba SITREP 2-62, 240400Z 1962, TOP SECRET.

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prompted the JCS on 24 October to name the Chief of Staff, USAF, as their executive to direct SAC and COMAD in carrying out crisis-related responsibilities.¹

510. A naval defensive measure was taken with the establishment of an antisubmarine barrier, to be placed initially in the vicinity of Argentina, Newfoundland, as directed by CINCLANTFLT on the 25th. The barrier was to be composed of patrol aircraft and submarines, and should the situation worsen, the barrier would be moved outward to the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom line.² SUBRON 8 moved out of New London at 1400 on 27 October, comprising [ten] submarines, which were to take up positions on the Argentina Barrier. All were expected to be in place by 2000 on 30 October.³

D. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

511. From the events and major command problems described, certain inferences may be drawn concerning underlying command and policy dilemmas. These are not the sorts of issues which appeared specifically in the flow of messages and directives, but rather appeared indirectly at intervals as certain problems arose. Nevertheless, the influence of these dilemmas was pervasive and quite evident in the nature of the major operational problems and in the way the JCS dealt with these.

512. The really crucial and interesting lessons derived from U.S. military deployments all came between October 20 and 28. These were the deployments made under the pressure of time, secrecy, and the need to act without provoking what we wished to avoid. Deployments continued up until the quarantine was lifted on November 21, since the Soviet

¹ HQ USAF Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, TOP SECRET. (Also referred to in Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Information, Chronology of the Cuban Crisis, TOP SECRET.) No record of the CS/USAF being so designated has been found in JCS files or other sources available to this study. Presumably such action was taken informally in the course of a JCS meeting on the 24th and the only instructions were relayed orally at the time.

² JCS Cuba SITREP 4-62, 280400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³ JCS Cuba SITREP 6-62, 280400Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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promise to remove the missiles had to be carried out, the negotiations for removal of the JL 28's conducted, and this promise carried out. However, these latter deployments suffered little of the pressures of the first week. The entire psychological atmosphere was changed by the Soviet concession on Sunday the 28th.

513. The relative smoothness demonstrated in some of the deployments was due in no small measure to the fact that U.S. forces had warning. While the CINC's were not officially informed by the JCS of the nature of the U.S. action program until the 21st of October, we have seen how the CONUS-based CINC's, LANT, SAC, CONAD, were all engaged in preparations by the 17th, the day after the President had seen the incriminating photographic evidence. Their subordinate commanders and the overseas CINC's were also very soon the recipients of information copies of messages or Service directives which alerted them to coming action. This interval permitted, despite rigid secrecy restrictions, many preparatory moves at the command and staff levels.

514. For example, [CINCSAC on the 17th directed his staff and subordinate commanders to prepare to execute the 1/8 airborne alert and the dispersal of the B-47 forces, and yes the moves were not ordered by the JCS until the 22nd.] Similarly, no air threat against the southeastern U.S. was likely until after the President's address on the evening of the 22nd, but CINCONAD had been directed to take action to augment the area's defenses on the 17th. AFLANT's deployments began at noon on the 21st, but were preceded by three days' preparation time.

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515. In these cases strategic warning was put to excellent use. However, the nature of the forces, their mobility and speed of response, allowed them to exploit the advantages of strategic warning. In the case of the assault forces, the other side of the strategic warning coin was shown. It is very often forgotten that the simple receipt of strategic warning itself is not enough to confer an advantage; one must be able to use it when one gets it. In other crisis situations of recent years the U.S. has sometimes received such warning, but has often been unable to act militarily because of political considerations. It has been necessary not to alarm friends, not to provoke enemies, to preserve secrecy. The second and third of these considerations were very evident in the Cuban crisis.

516. The dilemma of the Cuban crisis was that the very forces which had greatest need of the maximum strategic warning in order to prepare and to deploy, the assault forces, were the very ones which could least exploit what warning they did receive. [Under the need to maintain secrecy until the U.S. program was sprung as a surprise on the Russians on the 22nd, deployments by the ponderous assault forces using public railroads, highways, and ports were obviously infeasible. Thus strategic warning clashed in the political need for secrecy. This was crucially important because of the need of the assault forces to reduce to the minimum the time span between the opening of OPLAN 312 and the closure of all assault forces on Cuba.]

517. There was also evidently operative the other contradictory aspect mentioned above, political constraints. The U.S. policy was to ensure that the Soviets were fully aware of our intention and our ability to remove the

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offensive weapons, even if it meant invading Cuba to do so. On the other hand, we also wanted them to understand that we would do this only as a last resort in pursuit of the stated objective. We were threatening invasion and preparing for it clearly, but we did not wish to create the impression that a U.S. invasion was utterly inevitable, since this was the extreme measure of violence as far as Cuba was concerned. Invasion implied the destruction of the Castro regime, and thus raised an entirely different set of problems for the Russians.

518. Even if the secrecy requirements of the week before the 22nd had not tended to preclude it, any major assault forces deployments in that period may very well have been held up in order not to create an impression of inevitability as to employment, and thus tend to paint the Soviets into a corner. In other words, the critical political consideration of leaving the Soviets a way to escape a clash by simply removing the offensive weapons and thus make unnecessary a U.S. invasion of Cuba may well have strongly influenced the assault forces deployments.

519. Another problem area for command which emerged in the crisis concerned the clash of requirements for contingency operations against Cuba and the preparations for general war. Despite the overall potential in the situation, the crisis involved basically the likelihood of a limited war in Cuba. [REDACTED] At the same time the consequences of invasion were incalculable and preparations for possible all-out war indispensable. The problem of choice arose several times during the deployments between the requirements of the more likely but less [REDACTED]

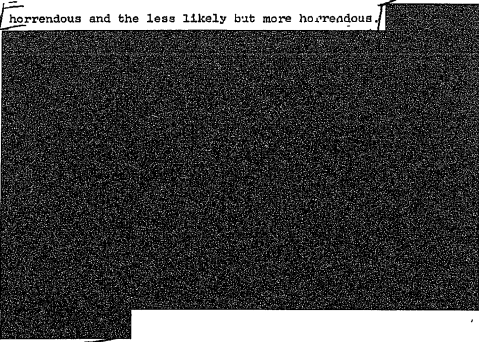
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horrendous and the less likely but more horrendous.



520. [In short, the dilemma posed was that of requirements for the best defense in a contingency versus the desire to apply the minimum measured degree of force in order to prevent escalation.]

521. Another aspect of this same general problem concerned the possible Cuban use of nuclear weapons against a U.S. assault force. The President's statement of October 22nd made clear how we would view any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against the U.S. or any other country in the hemisphere, but the Cuban use of such weapons in defense of their island was something else.



The nature of the discussion of this problem which ensued is described in Chapter VII of this study, 'Adjusting Contingency Plans to Crisis Requirements.'

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522.

The attitudes displayed by the JCS in their command actions in the first week clearly evinced these uncertainties. The clear academic distinctions between the aforementioned sets of categories were seen to be not so clear after all. The ambiguity arose from the fact of the Soviet presence. That presence created a situation which the contingency plans for Cuba no longer fitted.

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523. The result was a deliberate effort on the part of the JCS, presumably mirroring the concern of higher political authorities, to maintain a very tight control. In some cases this was done by carefully spelling out directives, such as in the Blockade of Cuba Order. In other cases it was deemed best not to be explicit, but rather to maintain control through flexibility. This sometimes, in fact almost inevitably, concurrently produced ambiguity, as in the rules of engagement instructions to CINCONAD for the southeast U.S. or the instructions to the Base Commander at Guantanamo. Presumably by not spelling out limitations of authority, the JCS would de facto compel responsible commanders to check back with them before making any serious move. Hence, by means of control tailored to be strengthened through ambiguity.

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